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#12

OCTOBER

GUIDE TO
VALLEY
GANGS

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CRIME

MUSIC
COMICS
REVIEWS



OP
EDGE

WARPED AUDIENCE

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DAVIS

\$old MICHAEL SCHERER out

Summer went out like a barbecue. See any good shows? Buy some good shoes?

Sitting on Main Street after the Warped tour I counted three different designs of Warped shopping bags dangling from the hands of returning revelers. In cool gray and relaxed blue hues, each plastic bag looked as daringly alternative as the bowling shirts and baseball caps contained within. On the street, I wondered how these Warped bands, which I once cataloged as outside the MTV/Modern Rock melee, had succumbed to easy check-out-line commercialism. Wasn't over-amplified rock once at odds with authority? I saw the future shimmering in the plastic glare of those shopping bags. Vans be damned. I envisioned a day when the Aquabats were sponsored by Aqua-Net, when the Rev. Horton Heat came courtesy of the Christian Coalition, when the Deftones sold hearing aides on the side.

A few weeks earlier, and in a different demographic, the Lilith Fair had come through the valley, loosening the collars and filling the wallets of the Starbucks and Biore marketing folks. Who could ask for a better crowd to hock pore-pulling nose tape at? Missy Elliot's face is aglow as Frappuccinos infiltrate the feminist underground. The Further and Horde tours also came through the area, lumbering like dinosaurs. Even for me, a once dedicated head, these shows seem like parodies of themselves. With few exceptions, those forty minute solos that once stretched out into the cosmic ether sound as scripted as the lines dropped by the small industry of dealers and vendors in the parking lot.

Meanwhile on the west coast, even Burning Man, once San Francisco's pyro-anarchic answer to the corporate festival, was beaten further into submission by the powers that be. Instead of just kicking the apocalyptic cyber-revelers out of Nevada, the state decided to make a bit of cash and has started charging the organizers six figures for on-call fire fighters, just in case the desert tries to burn down. As a result, the (once free) entrance fee to this year's weekend in the Nevada bad-lands could buy you more

than eighty large fries at McDonald's, maybe a Slurpee for all your friends. Burning Man is quickly becoming a playground for the young, stock-optioned, Silicon Valley set. Rented Winnebagos and camera-toting voyeurs now outnumber the performance artists and face tattoos.

So what remains for the economically disinclined who still like the ritual of mass gatherings celebrating good art, but can't handle the Madison Ave/Times Square get-up? What recourse have those who bother to care that bands like Rage Against the Machine work for the machine? Lemonwheel glowing like the northern lights (adrift with Pepsi sky writers)?

Yes, I know not to judge a book by its cover. I know that at all of the above festivals great music was played, art made, people met, doors of perception opened. But shouldn't all of the corporate packaging - the merging of real music with bad motives - cause concern? You see, I was thinking that I should just retire from my festival days. Chalk it up to my age, a newfound need for health insurance, changing drinking habits, and a false nostalgia for something I might have seen once on a VH1 documentary. But then, on a fluke, I ended up going to Glover, Vermont, for Bread and Puppet's annual Our Domestic Resurrection Circus.

Imagine Jim Henson producing an inexpensive version of Nosferatu in a Tolkien novel about agrarian uprisings, and you might get an idea of the aesthetic. Absent was the entrance fee, the free trial samples, the chic packaging, the souvenir t-shirts, and for that matter the rock 'n roll. Instead there were thousands of people, hundreds of human-sized puppets, loaves of free bread, fire-breathing puppet lions, Dada tributes to autumn, accordion-playing revolutionaries, and ladies in red sequins screaming out Marx's Manifesto.

Bread and Puppet still sticks with that archaic idea that art is not a commodity. "ART IS FOOD," reads a Bread and Puppet pamphlet. "You can't EAT it BUT it FEEDS you." With wallpaper paste, papier-mache, and hearty rye bread, I watched hundreds of volunteers make big

political art; and I was reassured that not all festivals, or for that matter soapboxes of resistance, came with a bar code. Instead of marketing themselves to the masses, the organizers have chosen to offer an alternative to all of the alternatives already offered.

Sadly, however, my praise comes post-mortem. This is an obituary; there will be no more summer circuses in Glover. Over the past few years, increasing numbers of party-hardy locals and tour kids have laid a sort of siege on the family-friendly festival - coming for cheap, unregulated camping, drum circles and drugs, not the Circus. This year they turned a good thing bad. Conditioned by cover charges and a constant police presence, these thousands, given the freedom of a free festival, couldn't resist missing the point. In one of the campgrounds, a guy known only as "June Bug" killed another man with a blow to the head. According to witnesses, June Bug was looking for more beer and a fight at around 6:30 in the morning. When he came along the campsite of 41 year-old Michael J. Sarazin, he kicked over the hibachi and started throwing hot dogs. Sarazin died defending his barbecue. Later that day, a girl told me that someone had slipped a tab of acid to a ten-year old waiting for his mother. In the understated words of Bread and Puppet's founder, Peter Schumann, the crowds "finally outgrew our capacities." Instead of compromising its principles by limiting attendance, Bread and Puppet will now step back to reconsider its future. The college-kid hippie-trip scene will find a new haunt. Summer festivals which can't be charted on a balance sheet will become even more scarce.

In parts of Mexico, I've been told, political prisoners are tortured with American soft drinks. Different political parties control Coca-Cola and Pepsi distribution, so citizens can voice their dissent or support by drinking the appropriate soda. I wonder if political resistance in the US will one day depend on the cola wars, or on the choice between brand name shoes. Then again, I wonder if it already does.



ISSUE 12...

ONE YEAR LATER

the year in review OR how I learned to stop worrying and love the biz

So, you wonder, what was it like starting a magazine?

Well, it wasn't easy. Consider:

The expectations (expenses) versus the realities (expenses are always higher than expected). The mistakes (many), the learning curve (ride it). The hirings. The firings. The friends you let down. Strangers you upset. Other downers, like the stores that stopped carrying us due to content (the word 'sex' on the cover of issue 4 was enough for many; Linus shooting smack in the *Peanuts* parody in 8; "repeated" use of the word 'diaphragm' in one of the stories in 9; a store owner thinking us "too violent;" the F-word whenever). The Catch-22 (potential advertisers who chose to hold off until we "make it or not"). The deadbeat advertisers and others who ripped us off (you know who you are). The turf wars with competing publications (sales reps from one telling our advertisers that we're about to fold; distributors from another caught red-handed throwing copies of *VMag* in the trash). The stories that could be told...

The profuse thanks - to our contributors, advertisers, vendors, friends, supporters, and staff at our printer's. To the staff here at *VMag*.

12 issues later - one year into it.

We've made it.

That means we're here to stay.

publisher/editor/designer

MURPHY

sales manager

KYLE ALESANDRA COHEN

assessive assistant

ANDREA CARLIN

staff artist

MATT SMITH

distribution

REIKKA SIMULA

legal counsel

DANIEL O. OFFNER

bookkeeping

KATIE LARKIN

accounting

LINDA SHEAR

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THE VMAG FIELD GUIDE TO VALLEY GANGS

BY L.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT SMITH

Welcome to our gang guide to the Valley, the one source that provides you with all the knowledge that will successfully allow you to gang and organized crime sight-see in the area.

The following information is based on interviews with officials from the Springfield, Northampton, Southampton, Easthampton, Amherst, Greenfield, and Brattleboro police departments.*

Webster's Dictionary defines a gang as, "a group of persons working to unlawful or antisocial ends" and "a band of antisocial adolescents" and "a group of persons having informal and unusual close social relations."

Modern day gangs include: street gangs, motorcycle gangs, prison gangs, white supremacist organizations, political revolutionary groups, organized crime groups and drug cartels. To make it easier on ourselves here at VMag we've decided to narrow our scope down to street gangs, white supremacist organizations and motorcycle gangs.

Police Officials determine a person's gang affiliation based on clothing worn, if he/she has tattoos associated with gang membership, if he/she uses gang handsigns, name is in a gang document, gang graffiti or hit list, and if he/she has ever been arrested with other gang members. One element does not mean gang membership - all criteria must be taken into account.

Most gangs and crime organizations stress power and respect, believe that reputation is important, and usually settle their disputes through violence. The member sacrifices an individual sense of self for a group identity to gain respect, money, power and a family - the need to belong to something.

The initiation process into many of these gangs include anything from stealing, getting a beat down, sex, or murder. In the case of the Los Solidos (see below), a pledge is required to perform a mission. If he/she does not complete the mission, he will be the subject of that mission.

Many gangs require members to fill out an application in which all names and addresses of family members are given. The application is then filed. If the member "crosses" the gang in any way, the file is pulled.

If a member wants to leave the group, termination of membership can be anything from a beat down to a contract being put out on the member's head. Detective Peter Fappiano of the Northampton Police Department remembers interviewing a gang member who had a \$5,000 price out on his head. That's quite an incentive.

These days, many gangs have gone high-tech, and run themselves more like a corporation or a business. The Latin Kings have a website, computerized records, schedule regular meetings and employ accountants, lawyers and even have a Public Relations Representative. The Hell's Angels are similar in that some of their members are lawyers and accountants. Officers have found fax machines and computers when making raids on Angels' clubhouses. Angels often con-

*Sgt. John Gibbons of the Holyoke Gang Task Force, the leading authority on gangs in the area, failed to respond to repeated phone calls.

tract out their "services" to people in the entertainment industry. They are well structured and organized issuing manuals, applications for membership to fill out and I.D. cards.

The source of income for most gangs is drug trafficking. However, gangs have been known to tap into other markets. The Hell's Angels offer up their services to big-named stars like the talented Sylvester Stallone and the influential Willie Nelson. They work the doors of clubs, keep crowd control at concerts, are the bodyguards, the bullet proof vests to the stars. For a fee, the Angels will be anyone's right hand man.

When doing this article, many "citizens" were surprised to hear about gang activity in their communities. The new trend is street gangs fanning out into the small towns, opening up their membership to include kids of all creeds and colors, thereby increasing numbers, territory and capital. There's something to be said for diversity. Members are "transported" to small towns because their parents move and set up residence, Department of Youth Services places them, or they are sent out to actively recruit.

It is difficult to assess how many gang members exist in the area, or if there is a gang presence at all. But the graffiti used by gang members to tag their territory ("territorial pissings" if you will) and to post warnings to other gang members is a good way to track gang activity.

Also, many gangs operating in smaller towns are more subversive, quietly trafficking drugs and packing their pockets. Because street gangs rarely wear their colors, they can go undetected. But Northampton, Easthampton, Southampton, Greenfield and Amherst all report gang activity in the area.

All of the police departments spoken to said that they are actively trying to prevent kids from getting involved in gangs. Police attend workshops, and are proactive in the schools, giving talks during class and creating after school programs. However, they also assert that many small towns are not trained to deal with gang activity.

STREET GANGS

In the Springfield and Holyoke areas, street gangs are estimated to be in the thousands. They are turf oriented and profit motivated. Their philosophies and ideas are continually changing. The latest trend among street gangs is to not wear their colors. Thus, they become less conspicuous, draw less attention to themselves, and are, in a word, able to blend.

Hispanic gangs are, for the most part, the most structured. The Latin Kings, La Familia, Neta and Los Solidos all have a hierarchy of power. This makes them more able to survive. When a leader "leaves," another is there to take his place. They schedule regular meetings and often begin these meetings with a prayer.

Sgt. McMann of the Easthampton Police Department says that in 1994/1995, Neta, Los Solidos,

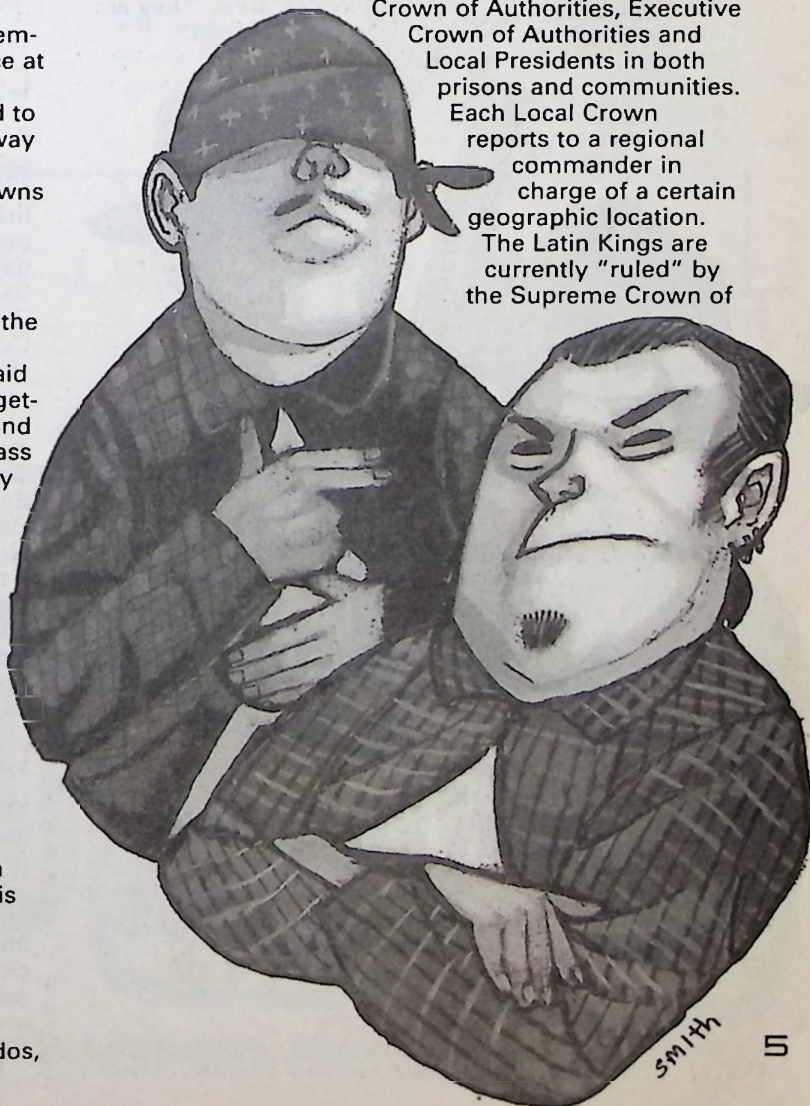
La Familia and Latin Kings were seen in the Easthampton area.

Asian gangs, on the other hand, are distinctive in that they meet often just to commit a crime. They appear to be more individualistic and have little or no loyalty to their organization, meeting only to commit a given crime. Many do not gather or meet on a regular basis for social activities. The development of defining characteristics, such as colors and signs, is fairly recent.

Criminal activity can include drive-by shootings, assaults, intimidation, drug trafficking, break-ins, armed robbery, murders, extortion and courthouse disturbances.

LATIN KINGS

The Latin Kings consist of both males and females - the Latin Kings and Queens. Traditionally, the Latin Kings have been of Hispanic descent. They have since opened their membership to blacks and whites. Leadership: They are organized into a hierarchy of power. They are highly structured with a Supreme Crown of Authorities, Executive Crown of Authorities and Local Presidents in both prisons and communities. Each Local Crown reports to a regional commander in charge of a certain geographic location. The Latin Kings are currently "ruled" by the Supreme Crown of



Authorities, King Tone, based in New York City. According to Lt. Silvernail of the Southampton Police Department, members of the Latin Kings were seen in Southampton five years ago. The members have since gone underground and there is no activity as of late.

COLORS: Black and gold with black symbolizing death, and gold, life. Their beads run in a sequence of five black followed by five gold for members; five black and two gold for executive members; and all black beads for enforcers or assassins.

SLOGAN: Amor De Rey, or Amor.

SYMBOL: Five pointed crown, five pointed star, lions head with a crown, code of armor. The most recent symbol is a bulldog with a crown.

INITIALS: A.L.K.N. (Almighty Latin King Nation) and A.D.R. (Amor Deu Rei/Love of the King) is used in tagging.

HAND SIGNAL: A crown made with the thumb and index fingers with the pinkie and other two fingers clenched.

ALLIES: The La Familia and Neta.

RIVAL: Los Solidos.

LOCATED: The Latin Kings are established in Springfield, Holyoke and the Chicopee areas. They are and have been a presence in West Springfield, Northampton, Florence, Agawam, Amherst and Southampton.



LATIN LOCALS

Small group of gang members in the Springfield area.

ALLY: Latin King Nation.

6

YOUNG CRAZY BOYS

Small group, predominantly Hispanic, with black gang

members. Springfield area.

ALLY: La Familia.

NETA

Established in 1970 at the Rio Pedras, Puerto Rico Correctional Facility by prison inmate Carlos LaSombra. The gang, according to La Sombra, was created to stop violence between inmates. Their philosophy is "to provide independence for their Puerto Rican homeland." They believe that they are the oppressed and the American government the oppressors.

COLORS: Red, white and blue - the colors of the Puerto Rican flag. Their beads run in sequences of three red, three white and three blue.

SLOGAN: DeCorazon.

SYMBOL: The Puerto Rican flag, "1.50" (meaning 150 % committed), and the crossed machetes of Los Macheteros.

HANDSIGNAL: Index and middle finger crossed.

STRUCTURE: Hierarchy of power.

LOCATED: Neta is established in Springfield, Holyoke and the correctional facility in Greenfield. They have been a presence in Northampton.

LOS SOLIDOS

Solidos are both male and female, with the females calling themselves Solidas. The gang is traditionally Hispanic but has, like the previous gangs, opened their membership to include whites and blacks. The gang now accepts any race over the age of 16. The gang formed in 1990-1991 and consists of The Savage Nomads and the Ghetto Brothers, two Hartford street gangs.

COLORS: Blue and red, with blue symbolizing the sky, and red, blood. The sequence of beads is three red and three blue.

HAND SIGNAL: Left hand to the side, right arm above the head, fists clenched.

SYMBOL: Joker masks, one blue and one red.

Sometimes tag with T.S.O. - Totally Solid Organization.

RIVALS: The La Familia, Latin Kings, Neta

STRUCTURE: Hierarchy of power. A President, Vice President, 5 Executive Stars and a Secretary.

DOCTRINE: 23 rules for Solidos on Probation.

LOCATED: The Los Solidos are established in Springfield, Holyoke, and scattered through Easthampton, Turners Falls, Greenfield and Chicopee.

LA FAMILIA

The La Familia is mostly Hispanic with some white members. Governed by the "Ten General Rules of the La Familia," stressing the importance of respect, appearance, academics, history, positivity, culture and blood line. A prayer is said before each meeting and the Family Greeting is said at the meeting's close. Sounds like a nice social organization were it not for the criminal activity. The La Familia prayer involves some sort of disclaimer, "I'll also say I was never forced into the Familia Nation."

COLORS: Red, white and blue - red is blood, white is laws and blue is the sky.

SLOGAN: Amor De Familia, Amor, Amor.

HAND SIGNAL: Thumb, index and middle finger extended, two others clenched.

LOCATED: La Familia are established in Springfield, West Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee, with a presence in Northampton, Greenfield, Turners Falls, Amherst and Easthampton.

BLACK MOB

Hispanic and Afro- American. Located in the Springfield area.

HILLSIDE POSSE

Predominantly black males. Local Springfield gang.

SOUTHSIDE POSSE

Membership consists primarily of Hispanic males. A Holyoke gang believed to have been recently disbanded.

COLOR: Orange and blue beads.

SLOGAN: True South.

HAND SIGN: Ok sign with three fingers against heart.

THE TINY RASCALS

The largest Asian gang in the country. Known for their brutality. Their membership is predominantly Cambodian and Lao male and females, ranging from 12 to 16 in age. There was an incident fairly recently in which a Tiny Rascal was involved in a stabbing at a UMASS school dance.

COLORS: Blue and gray. They often wear blue bandannas and hats with the letters TRG.

SYMBOLS: Tattoos of TRG, CWA often on the back of the hand and on the torso, and tagging of territory with TRG.

ALLY: They have been known to ally with the Like Brothers Crips.

RIVALS: The Exotic Foreign Cambodian Crips out of Providence and the Blood Red Dragons out of Boston.

LOCATED: The Tiny Rascals are established in Lowell and Springfield and have a presence in Brattleboro, Easthampton, Amherst and Greenfield.

BLUNT SQUAD GANG

Asian gang with gang activity in Lowell.

LAOS BOYS GANG

Asian gang with gang activity in Lowell.

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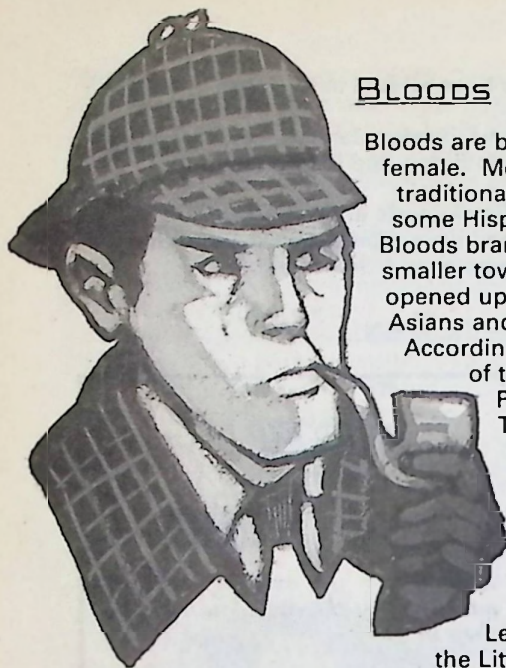
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BLOODS

Bloods are both male and female. Membership was traditionally black with some Hispanics. As the Bloods branched out to the smaller towns, they have opened up membership to Asians and whites.

According to Mitch Civchy of the Northampton Police Department, The Bloods in the area were run by a twenty-something man from Texas who "employed" children to commit petty crime.

Led by the King of the Little Guys, the

members of these Youngbloods, a subset of the traditionally all-black L.A. Bloods Gang, have settled in Southampton and Easthampton over the last year and are predominantly Asian with some Hispanics. There are few, if any, black members at all. Southampton Police have not picked up Blood members on crimes but Easthampton Police have arrested members on

assault and drug trafficking charges. They are actively recruiting. COLORS: Red. They wear a red bandanna tied to the left side.

HAND SIGN: A pitchfork upside-down OK.

SYMBOLS: Playboy bunny, dice with numbers showing, five pointed star, five pointed crown, a staff, pyramid with 21 blocks inside.

ALLY: The Bloods have, in the past, allied themselves with the Vice Lords and People Nation.

RIVALS: The Crips have always been the arch rival of the Bloods. The Folk and RNWBP have also been rivals.

INITIATION: Beatings, jumped, sex.

LOCATED: The Bloods are an established presence in Southampton. This group is predominantly Asian with some Hispanics. Blood tagging has been seen on schools, basketball courts and street corners. They are associated with the Bloods in Boston who are predominantly Asian, Caucasian and Hispanic. They are a subdivision of the Bloods, often referred to as the Youngbloods with the Y used in their taggings. There is said to be splinter groups in the Northampton area. The Bloods in Southampton are out of Connecticut and have been in the area for approximately five years.

20 Luv

20 Luv originated in the prisons as a spinoff of the Hartford-based gang, the Magnificent 20's who date back to the late 60's and 70's (original members of the Magnificent 20's are all but gone). They have by-laws of twenty rules and regulations. Membership is primarily black males. All membership must be approved by the Chairman as well as the "family".

COLORS: Black and green with the beads running in a sequence of three black and three green. They wear white and blue handkerchiefs.

SYMBOL AND HAND SIGN: Closed fists banged together, then index finger placed over the heart like a peace sign, hitting twenty to the heart meaning love. Graffiti is often 20 Luv written with a heart.

STRUCTURE: Run by a council of one Chairman, five Co-Chairmen, Captains and a Sergeant of Arms.

ALLY: Los Solidos.

RIVALS: Latin Kings and Neta.

LOCATED: Springfield and Chicopee areas.

THE UNIVERSAL ZULU NATION

A New York City-based gang new to the area. A predominantly black male and female gang, Zulu Kings and Zulu Queens, who assert that they are "no gang." They are governed by twenty precepts and celebrate the Zulu Anniversary (founding date) on November 12. Zulu Nation has been located in the Springfield area.

SHORT AND LESS THAN SWEET

The following are gangs, or beginnings of gangs, that faded fast:

THE BLOCK

A group of approximately twenty males who occupied the Hampshire Mall around the year of 1995. The group soon disbanded.

COLORS: Dark blue and light blue.

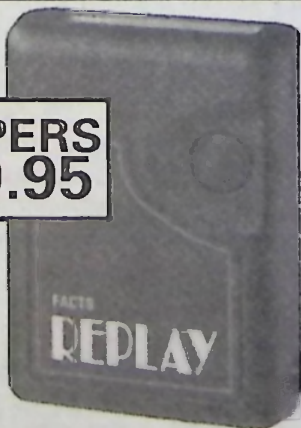
SLOGAN: This is our block.

CIA

The CIA was a low-key group that tagged much of

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Easthampton in 1993. They posed little threat and faded within a year.

FSU

The Fuck Something Up group was also a presence for a short time in Easthampton. They came and went within a month.

THE GENTLEMEN

Another shortlived Easthampton-based gang. A group of about ten to twelve males identified by their long dark trench coats and their bad attitudes. After a few of their members were arrested on minor charges, the group disbanded, lasting for only two seasons.

THE IRISH BROTHERHOOD

Originated in Greenfield about 1994 and consisted of white males from the same economic background and neighborhood. While they did emulate the look of the skinhead with their crew cuts and boots, they were not believed to be a fascist organization, "not a focal group of hate." Its members associated with members of different races and were not discriminate regarding who they harrassed or intimidated. They had little structure with no hierarchy of power. Once a few of its members were arrested on assault charges, the group disbanded.

SYMBOL: Shamrocks

COLORS: Green. They wore Notre Dame jackets and tattoos.

LOCATED: They were established in Greenfield with members in Turners Falls and as far east as Athol.

WHITE SUPREMACIST GANGS & ORGANIZATIONS

Unlike the traditionally Black and Hispanic gangs, white supremacist groups are not territory oriented or profit motivated. Also, graffiti is used to vandalize and to spout their white power ideas and not to mark territory. The groups have little structure.

According to Det. Peter Fappiano of the Northampton Police Department, approximately five years ago three hardcore Skinhead males from Connecticut had established a presence in the area. The only incident that occurred involved a woman and a hot bowl of noodles. This was more of a domestic dispute than a hate crime. Since then, there has been no reported activity. Fascist organizations are few. The only fascist organization reported in the area is located in Easthampton. They are a fairly isolated group with little structure and no interest in territory or capital gain. Sgt. McMann says that their mentality is to "get together and bash blacks, Jews and gays." Ironically, this hate group is fairly peaceful.

SKINHEADS

An organization that began in the 80's. The group consists of males and females ranging in age of 15-25. They share a white power philosophy and have little or

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no structure.
CLOTHING
AND LOOK:
Shaved
heads,
leather jack-
ets, black
boots, ragged
t-shirts.

SYMBOL:
Swastikas.
HAND SIGN:
The Hitler
wave.

ALLY: Any
white that
hates any-
body not
white.

RIVAL: Anybody not white. Anybody white who likes anybody not white.

UNITED SKINS

A group of approximately ten white males ranging in age of 15 to 24, and from a lower middle class background. In existence since 1993, they are a fairly peaceful organization, fairly isolated and thought to be more of a club than a gang. There is no hierarchy of power.



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CLOTHING: They wear combat boots, black pants and a black T-shirt with "United Skins" in white lettering.
SYMBOL: Nazi Swastika.

ALLY: Any white that hates anybody not white.

RIVAL: Anybody not white. Any white who likes anybody not white.

LOCATED: The United Skins are established in Easthampton.

MOTORCYCLE GANGS

Motorcycle gangs congregate in what they call clubhouses. They are not considered to be a gang, but an organized crime group. Members of the El Diablos, Hell's Angels, Long Riders and Devil's Disciples have been known to frequent bars in the Hampshire and Franklin Counties, with an occasional dispute here and there. Gang finances come from various sources that may include a few or all of the following: extortion, drug trafficking, gang dues, stealing or contracting out their "services." "Services" could mean performing a hit or a robbery or it could be, as in the case of the Hell's Angels, being the human bullet proof vest to that big time star Sylvester Stallone.

HELL'S ANGELS

With 1,200 members in the U.S. and 600 in other countries, Hells Angels are the most well known and most powerful outlaw motorcycle gang on the road today. It is said that no other motorcycle gang exists without their permission. Their members are lawyers, businessmen, accountants, etc., ranging in age from the post-pubescent 17 year-old pledge to those who can qualify for senior citizenship discounts. No woman has ever known to have been patched. Once a year, they put crime aside and band together to get involved with the charity, Toys for Tots.
SYMBOL: Patches.
ALLIES: Willie Nelson, Sylvester Stallone, The South African Government, etc.

RIVAL: Anyone who gets in the way.

LOCATED: The Hell's Angels have clubhouses in Pittsfield and Lee.

EL DIABLOS

In '96, East Coast leader, the 37 year-old Gregory Doomey was arrested for trafficking cocaine and methamphetamine and was sentenced to 20 years after pleading guilty. In August of that same year, 13 members of the El Diablos were arrested at the Northampton airport for trafficking guns.

COLORS: Red and black

LOCATED: Many of the small towns have had run-ins with this motorcycle gang; most involved barroom disputes.

LONG RIDERS

The Long Riders have been located in Springfield.

DISCIPLES

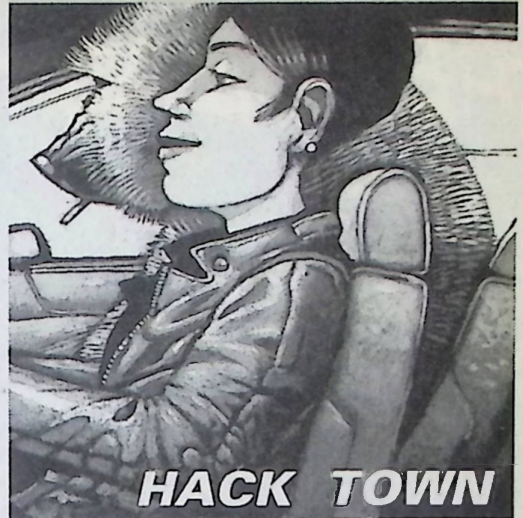
The Disciples have been located throughout the Hampshire and Franklin counties.



touched me

Cocks crowed
In the Spanish hamlet of Cebriero.
A collection of amateur angels
Looked down on my remains.
I, Magdalena,
With 6 stars etched
Around my navel
In gold and scarlet.
I was no Black Dahlia
Cleanly sliced in neat sections
With a starlet-red mouth
Still intact.
I was more
Like a witch in the water,
Distorted and limp as a flower
Left to dry, retracting
Its bloom and color.
I was 35, taken by surprise
As I picked heather and golden star
By the river.
My killer was handsome,
Stroked my hair gently for a moment
Before lighting a cigarette
And strolling away
Through the trees.
It took a few minutes
Before I realized
I could touch nothing
And nothing touched me.

- Corinne De Winter



EAST BRIDGEWATER
IS NOT ON MY MAP

THERE'S BRIDGEWATER
AND WEST BRIDGEWATER

NEW BRIDGEWATER
AND OLD BRIDGEWATER

BUT EAST BRIDGEWATER
SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN DRAINED

I LOOK FOR A TOWNIE
AT THE NEAREST EXIT

AND ENCOUNTER A PERFECT
STRANGER AT THE GAS STATION

"NOPE, NEVER HEARD OF IT,"
HE TELLS ME

AND I'M BEGINNING TO THINK
EAST BRIDGEWATER

REALLY DOESN'T
WANT TO BE FOUND

BUT TO WHOM DO I REPORT
THIS ERRAND SPEEDING TICKET

WITH ANONYMOUS PHOTOGRAPH
TAKEN ON THE ROAD BY

AUTOMATIC CAMERA AND
DISPATCHED IN THE MAIL?

I WAS NEVER EVER SPEEDING
AND HARDLY EVEN KNEW THE TOWN

BUT STILL IT WANTS
FIFTY DOLLARS OR FIFTY DAYS

AND THIS IS
MY LAST WARNING.

- ROBERT LORD KEYES

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THE BEAST WITHIN

THE STRANGE CASE OF
FRANKLIN COUNTY

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CLAXTON III

S. R. BISSETTE ART

THE WASTREL

The last man hanged for murder in Massachusetts was a resident of Franklin County, a man of Irish descent executed for the slaying by strangulation of a widow named Hattie Evelyn McCloud.

The 1897 trial of John O'Neil, of Buckland, while interesting from an historical point of view, because of the way it ended, is actually one of the least bizarre murder cases in the northernmost county of Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley.

In the last 20 years or so Franklin County has produced some of the most grotesque and even incredible, murder cases in the country. Among these strange slayings are a torture murder, an incineration and a real life version of a slasher movie killing.

The first murder in our review happened at the end of the 19th century in a small hill town in the west of the county.

In 1897 Shelburne Falls was a fairly modern New England village. It

had shops, hotels, factories, a train depot and even a few electric lights. It was a place where many people didn't bother to lock their doors at night and a woman felt safe strolling home along a darkened lane.

According to the prosecutors in the O'Neil case, Hattie McCloud, who made her living as a music teacher, had gone, on the evening of 8 January 1897, from her home on Crittenden Road in Buckland down into the village to pay some bills and obtain a book that she was giving as a gift to one of her music students.

Upon reaching the village at about 5:30 p.m. Mrs. McCloud stopped in at a store on the Buckland Road, at the end of Bridge Street, and cashed a check in the amount of \$39.60. Working her way through the various shops where she had accounts, McCloud paid her bills and made new purchases, leaving town around 6:30 with the remaining \$15.62, which shop keepers recalled was in the form of a \$10 bill, a \$5 and some change.

O'Neil, prosecutors said, was a wastrel. A man who had no job and no prospects. He lived with his parents, contributing nothing to the household, and often sponged off his friends for drinks.

The 24-year-old O'Neil was known to drink heavily on those occasions when he did have money, or when his friends were willing to stand him a pint or two of whiskey. He was also said, by those who knew him well, to be a lecher.

The day before the murder of Hattie McCloud, O'Neil was heard to say to of her, "I am going up with her some night," by which, witnesses said, he made plain his desire to have sex with her.

On the morning of the murder, O'Neil again expressed his randiness and said that by hook or by crook he was going to get himself "a piece" that day.

Throughout that Friday, 8 January 1897, O'Neil made it clear that he was broke and drank heavily on the sufferance of his friends. On

the night of the murder, about half past six, the young man's friends lost sight of him and did not see him again until just before 8 p.m.

When O'Neil did surface again he, surprisingly, began to pay off debts to his friends and buy pints of whiskey that they all shared. He also made a point of flashing the money that he had, which consisted of a \$10 bill, a \$5, and some change.

On the morning of Saturday 9 January 1897 the body of Hattie McCloud was found, by her father and a handyman, in a field not far from her home. She was discovered lying on a shallow slope with her undergarments in disarray and her skirts bunched up around her waist.

The autopsy, which was performed at her father's house an hour later, indicated that she had been brutally raped and strangled with such violence that her trachea was crushed.

On that morning O'Neil began his drinking early, buying pint after pint of whiskey for himself and his friends. Soon, emboldened by liquor, the young Bucklander stumbled around town making wild statements about the murder and at one point even demonstrating how McCloud "must have been strangled" despite the fact that the cause of death had not yet been announced.

At the climax of the trial, in July of 1897, it took the jury less than two hours to find O'Neil guilty of murder in the first degree. After a relatively short appeals process, on 7 January 1898 O'Neil was taken to a place of execution and there hanged by the neck until he was dead.

THE DOUGHBOY

Perhaps the most notorious murder ever to take place in Franklin County occurred in the town of Greenfield. The discovery of the murder, however, began in an abandoned granite quarry in the small town of Fitzwilliam, N.H.

In May of 1995 a group of road workers were cutting brush near the intersection of Route 119 and Richmond Street, when one of them glanced over the edge of an old quarry and saw a body floating above a rock shelf a few feet under the water.

As the body was removed from the still frigid water two things were noted immediately - the state of decomposition was going to make identification difficult and the man had been brutalized before he was killed.

The body had been held under water through the winter because, before throwing the corpse into the quarry, the murderers had bound the cadaver with blankets, lengths of wire and barbell weights.

During the autopsy, the medical examiner noted that the corpse had been scalped, its jaw broken in several places, and three of its fingers almost completely severed at the tips. Fortunately, enough was left of the fingertips to take prints, which allowed police to identify the body as that of a missing 22-year-old homeless man from Greenfield, Mass., named Billy A. Paige.

Paige was well-liked on the streets of Greenfield, and was known as "Doughboy" to his friends because he was plump and good natured and loved to cook.

The young, mildly retarded man had been reported missing several months earlier by members of his family, who were completely unaware that he was being held just a few miles away from them in a house on Chapman Street near downtown Greenfield.

According to prosecutors, members of the Perry family, including Frederick, Roger and Richard Perry, their mother Lena and two of their cousins, Clinton and John Maynard, as well as Daniel Nauman, a family friend, held Paige captive for four months over the winter of 1994-1995 in the

*Just
Because...*

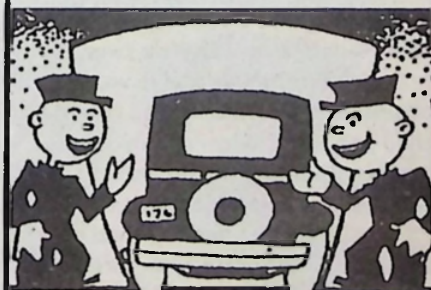
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Chapman Street house that they rented. There they subjected him to a wide variety of tortures and rape.

In the handwritten confessions made by several of the torturers during the investigation were detailed accounts of the brutal forms of degradation visited upon Paige while he was in their clutches. Among the assaults were beatings with various instruments, the use of a modified electric cord as a cattle prod, the breaking and slicing of fingers and forced oral copulation.

According to the confessions, Paige was also starved, losing as much as 100 pounds, because he could not eat once his attackers had broken his jaw.

Autopsy photographs that were shown during the murder trials clearly depict a lower jaw that was so badly fractured, it had come apart in pieces. According to testimony, the jaw was broken by John Maynard who, with the help of his brother, Clinton, held Paige still while repeatedly battering his face.

Other testimony offered in the trial recounted how Paige had been beaten with bicycle chains, burned with hot knives and in one case tied up with a coffee can in his hands and used as a human spittoon.

During the second murder trial held in the case, that of Clinton Maynard, at least one juror was completely overcome by the display of autopsy evidence, and the proceedings were delayed several times when she burst into tears, or fled the courtroom trying to suppress her gorge.

As of this writing, all but one of the defendants in the case has been sent to prison, or otherwise punished, and the last case, that of Roger Perry, has been delayed while appeals are argued on the admissibility of his confession.

Motions on the suppression of the confession of Roger Perry will be heard before the Supreme Judicial Court, meeting in Franklin County, October 5.

DADDY DEAREST

Another infamous slaying in Franklin County happened in Sunderland late in the winter of 1993 in a small house on Amherst Road. The murderer in that case was a man named James Cyr, who killed his onetime girlfriend, Tara Hartnett, in a dispute over custody of the couple's infant daughter.

During the trial it was established by testimony that Cyr was obsessed with his daughter, rarely allowing others to hold, or even touch the child and never allowing anyone else to change her or feed her. Hartnett's mother testified that he would even sleep in the same bed as the little girl when the couple went back to the Boston area for a visit.

Hartnett and Cyr had never had a really good relationship, but it had begun to deteriorate even further during the winter of 1992-1993. Throughout those months the couple argued constantly over the care of their child and the verbal fights eventually degenerated into physical violence.

Eventually, Hartnett decided to file for sole custody of the child and to move back to eastern Massachusetts. When Cyr found out about the court filing, and the fact that Hartnett had also filed for a restraining order against him, he went berserk.

On the night of 20 March 1993 Cyr drove from his residence in Puffton Village to East Plumtree Road, about 1,000 feet from Hartnett's home, where he parked behind a clump of trees. Police say that he then crossed Route 116 and made his way to her house where he knocked on the door

and then forced his way inside. He carried with him a large kitchen knife and a canister of gasoline.

According to Cyr's own testimony, once inside the residence he fought with Hartnett, punched her and chased her through the house, stabbing her repeatedly. The medical examiner said that she had been stabbed eight times, but suffered nine wounds, because one cut penetrated her arm.

And, even though she had suffered multiple puncture wounds, according to the medical examiner, Hartnett was still alive when Cyr poured gasoline over her body and set her ablaze.

The autopsy showed that Hartnett's lungs were full of soot and smoke deposits, which means that she was still breathing as the flames engulfed her.

Because of technical problems in Cyr's first trial for murder, he was tried a second time for killing Hartnett and was found guilty again.

In an unusual move in a Massachusetts court, the jury in the second trial returned to the courtroom after the verdict so they could watch as the judge sentenced Cyr to a life behind bars.

THE FRIDAY THE 13TH MURDER

Mark Branch had always wondered what it would be like to kill someone. He speculated about it frequently in discussions with his friends and on one occasion reportedly told a woman of his acquaintance that he had, one Halloween, donned a hockey mask like that worn by the serial killer in the "Friday the 13th" slasher movies and tried to stab a young girl at the Greenfield Middle School.

Branch had spent his life in and out of mental institutions and specials schools for children with

emotional problems, but during the summer of 1988, according to his closest friends, he behaved more normally than they had ever seen before. Still, on the morning of 24 October 1988 it is believed that Branch drove his car to the home of his friend Sharon Gregory and stabbed her more than two dozen times.

Branch was a devotee of the most lurid form of horror movie and when police searched his home after the murder, they found hundreds of books, magazines and videos related to the slasher genre. He was said to be most fond of the character Jason, from the *Friday the 13th* series; a killer who uses knives, axes and swords to dispatch, usually, scantily clad coeds. Friends of Branch's told police that "... he talked about living out a fantasy of being Jason."

When Gregory's body was found, it was lying in an upstairs bathroom in her family's home with stab wounds to the back and head, the throat slashed. According to police accounts the neck wound was very deep. The body was clothed.

For weeks after the discovery of Sharon Gregory's body the people of Greenfield and surrounding towns were in a full fledged panic. Sales of dead bolts and alarm systems were brisk, guard dogs sold for premium prices, and firearms sales were more than 100 percent above where they were the same time the previous year.

Wild rumors about the Gregory murder abounded throughout October and most of November, and Branch, who had not been seen in town since the day of the murder, was reported to have been spotted by frightened people from Connecticut to Vermont. As it turned out, however, Branch had already ceased to be a threat.

On 28 November 1988, a hunter, chasing a deer through the hills of Buckland, found the body of Mark Branch hanging from the limb of a tall pine tree. According to the medical examiner's estimate, he had hanged himself on the same day as the murder.

Branch's car, which had been found abandoned on a back road in Buckland, when searched by police was found to have a number of bloodstains in its interior, including a bloody footprint on the accelerator pedal.

After the body was found, some of Branch's friends complained that the media had made their pal look like a kook. One, Sean Goselin, was quoted by *Boston Magazine* as saying that Branch hadn't murdered Gregory because he wanted to be the movie monster, Jason.

"I believe he killed Sharon because he wanted to know what it felt like to kill somebody. She was a victim of circumstances. The opportunity was there, and he just did it," he said.

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the MAYHEM man

Uncle Fester is the author of *Practical LSD Manufacture*, *Secrets of Methamphetamine Manufacture*, and *Home Workshop Explosives*, among others.

JOE GABRIEL:
TELL US A LITTLE
ABOUT YOUR BACK-
GROUND, FESTER.

Uncle Fester: Well, I'm a 1981 graduate of Marquette University in Milwaukee, where I had a double major in Chemistry and Biology. The name Uncle Fester came from my college days. One of my favorite diversions was to cook up and detonate batches of explosives. Great fun! Before you knew it, I was Uncle Fester.

Over the years I've written a number of books, including *Secrets of Methamphetamine Manufacture*, which is in its 4th edition, and *Practical LSD Manufacture*. Another one of my books is *Silent Death*, which is about the guerilla use of chemical warfare. That one got me on Japanese TV a couple of times because it includes recipes for cooking nerve gas. My most recent book is *Vestbusters - The Home Manufacture of Armor Piercing Ammunition*. In all my books I take great pride in giving my readers a depth of knowledge in a field where the authorities want them to remain ignorant. Ignorance in

Uncle Fester interviewed by Joe Gabriel

these matters is considered a sign of virtue. I've always thought that was strange.

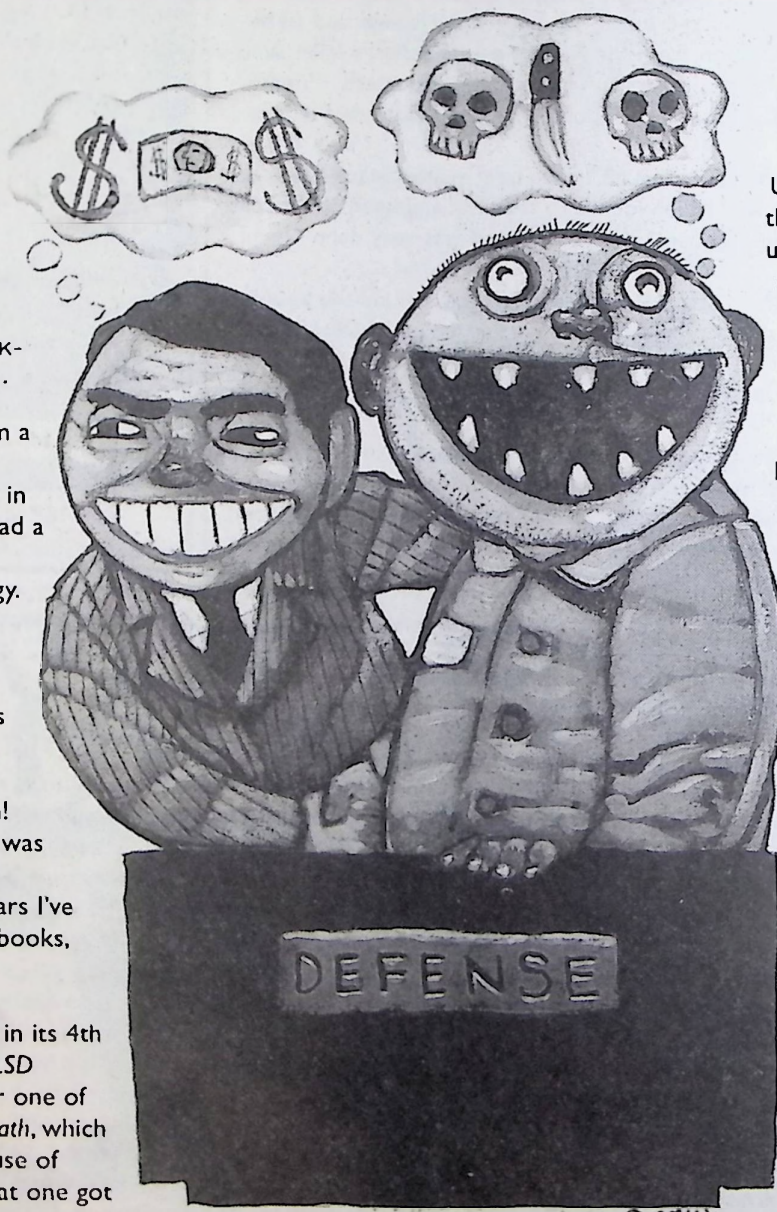
J: WHY DO YOU
WRITE THESE KINDS
OF BOOKS?

UF: Back when I was in the clandestine drug manufacturing business, I always told myself and my friends that someday I'd have to write a book on the topic because it would be a terrible waste for all the knowledge I've accumulated to go unpublished. That's the basis of scientific advance, the publishing of your discoveries so that others can take them and advance them further. So back in the mid-eighties, I was lounging around in my jail cell watching 20-20. Barbara Walters was doing a piece on what she called "terrorist publishers" and the horrible books that they sell. She just worked herself up into a fit wondering what could be done to stop them. If the likes of Barbara Walters could be so

moved by these trashy lit-

tle books, which I knew from expe-

rience to be mostly superficial primers, Well, I thought, she ain't seen nothing yet! That same night I had someone down the cellblock pass me his typewriter. The rest, as they say, is history.



matt smith illustration

J: SO WHAT'S YOUR VIEW OF THE DRUG WAR IN GENERAL?

UF: It's basically a power grab by all the levels of government, and an opportunity for the politicians to make people into scapegoats to cover up for their own incompetence and mismanagement. A basic concept that we all should grasp is that war is the health of the state. It is through war that the state is allowed to increase its power over the individual. The only problem with war that is risky - you might get your butt kicked. Even taking over some regional despot like Saddam is very risky, as he might be able to buy a nuke, smuggle it into Washington DC, and take you out. The much safer alternative is a perpetual state of war against some segment of your own population. Look at what it's got them - police powers that the gestapo would envy. The FBI wants to be able to simultaneously tap 1% of all the phones in the US, and thinks us unpatriotic if we should question why. They can seize any or all of your assets without charge, and prevent you from suing to get it back because they have reduced you to poverty. The list goes on and on, and it's all because of "the evil dope fiends, who must be destroyed." The vast majority of the population are compliant sheeple, who just go along with all of this. I guess I'm not so easily led.

J: WHAT'S YOUR ROLE IN THE WHOLE THING?

UF: The way I see it, the establishment has all the TV networks, newspapers, magazines and entertainment media all walking lock-step with their repressive agenda. That someone would openly buck the tide just appalls them. Well, I guess that's where I fit in, appalling them. It's a hell of a job, but somebody has to do it.

The notion that this drug war could ever be won is nothing short of idiotic. That's another piece of evidence that the whole fiasco is just part of the plan to expand government power. An unending unwinnable drug war calling for progressively more severe measures taken against the people. The urge to take drugs is part of the human biological makeup. Every culture has it, and always had and always will. The best one can do is try and guide the drug demand toward less harmful substances such as pot and psychedelics. Alcohol and tobacco are clearly in the more harmful drug group, yet they aren't even popularly perceived as being drugs. So much for all this "drug education" that's been going for the past generation or so.

J: HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THOSE WHO SAY YOUR BOOKS ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO DO CRIMINAL ACTS LIKE BLOW THINGS UP?

UF: Generally, the things I write about I approve of whole-heartedly. An exception would be launching chemical attacks as detailed in *Silent Death*. But even for this, in a guerrilla war situation chemical munitions could be a great equalizer for an under-equipped force. As for my drug books, the danger in these activities mostly lies in the possibility of being busted and thrown in a dungeon. This is an example of blaming the victim. If someone decides to circumvent the black market drug distribution system by making some of his own, why should anyone care? There are too many busy-bodies sticking their noses where they don't belong.

J: WHAT KIND OF RESPONSE DO YOU GET FROM THE PUBLIC?

UF: Well, that depends on what segment of the public you are talking about. When I'm interviewed by the electronic media, especially TV, they are universally appalled. One interviewer from a TV station in Seattle had me on the air for close to 20 minutes pressing me in a manner reminiscent of a DA, trying to get me to admit responsibility for the Oklahoma bombing and the Tokyo nerve gassing. He had a lot of trouble grasping the fact that the people responsible for those acts are the perpetrators, period. TV news is show business, so to hype their ratings there must be conflict and a bad guy. I'm usually quite willing to play along and be outrageous for the cameras. The print media tends to be more substantive. They generally are looking for more information, commentary or good quotes and it shows in their work.

I get quite a bit of fan mail, and it's almost universally supportive. The vast majority of fan mail comes from clandestine chemists, and they share with me cooking tips and recipes, ask questions dealing with the topics covered in my books, and report on trends in law enforcement. This reader feedback is quite valuable, and results in better writing on my part. There's quite a lively clandestine culture out there.

J: DO MOST OF THEM KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING?

UF: There's a wide variation in skill level. In my books, I recommend a couple of semesters of college level Organic Chem with lab as the proper starting point. The vast majority of them have this. Then from there, becoming properly skilled is mostly a matter of practice with sound guidance in the theory of what is being done. This is where my books come in. I've been there and have quite a bit of experience to share with the beginner. I always emphasize the correct purification techniques, and make it clear the products should come out

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nicely white and crunchy. This knowledge is also of value to the consumer, so that they don't believe some BS about gruesome-looking products being more potent.

J: IS IT A DANGEROUS FIELD TO GET INTO?

UF: By far the greatest source of danger comes from the possibility of being busted. There is some danger of fire if solvents are mishandled, but the same could be said of the autobody repair business. The danger of poisoning oneself is pretty low, so long as basic precautions are taken. It's obvious when you've messed something up because your product doesn't crystallize, or you don't get anything to distill at the product's boiling point.

The danger from the law depends greatly upon your situation. The major scientific supply companies are a notorious bunch of snitches. They go the extra mile beyond that required by the Diversion Act. If one is in an industrial or academic setting where some basic equipment and supplies can be brought home with you, this source of danger is largely averted. Along the same line of thought, industrial suppliers are much less enamored with the idea of informing on their customers. If one is going to produce enough of a "controlled substance" to become a fairly large player in the market, then another source of danger comes into play. We're all familiar with this, and it's nothing new: The danger of busted people trying to bring you down to save themselves, disgruntled ex-lovers looking to do you in, and so on. The best way to avoid this from happening is to not stay in business too long. If you're after a pile of cash, then get in, get it, and get out.

J: WHAT DO YOU SEE FOR THE FUTURE?

UF: I just see things getting worse. The oppression is just going to get more and more severe. The politicians will keep promising that if we just give them some more of our basic human liberties, they will deliver victory in the war on drugs. All of this will be futile, as supply will meet demand in the market. This will continue until a full-blown totalitarian state is achieved, or the generally dumb public finally figures out that this is a scam and they've been had. I can't predict which of these two paths this country will take, but the farther along the first path the more relevant my mayhem books become.

(UNCLE FESTER'S BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FROM LOOMPANICS UNLIMITED, POB 1197, PORT TOWNSEND, WA 98368.)

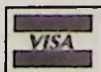
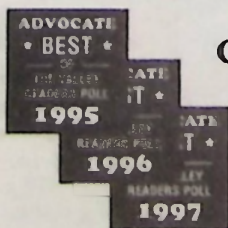
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D.E.K.E.

The day they bagged Robert Parish, I lost all faith in mankind. I mean, this ain't the fat guy who sits on the mailbox at Trumbull and King at 3 o'clock in the morning blowing kisses at cars. This is the Chief, Chief of the Celtics. Winner of all them championship banners with Bird and McHale. The Chief! Caught red-handed with a bag of dope heavy enough to levee a dam. Think of the kids! What about them and their dreams of one day becoming 6'11" centers for the Boston Celtics? Shot to hell, that's what. Then I starts to reasoning; if somebody like Robert Parish can get away with leading a double life as a drug addict - strapping on the old buzz bag like a horse between races - what about the rest of the jiboneys I run into every day? The guy who fixes my car. What if he sneaks behind the garage for fifteen minutes and comes back and fills my white-walls with gas instead of air and I go up like the Chinese New Year? What if I decides to donate a pint of my life-saving blood and the nurse suddenly gets the munchies (brought on by the three bones she smoked on her lunch hour) and I'm left there to get drained like a mummy in the Metropolitan Museum? Or my kid's Sunday school teacher - assuming I had kids - loads up with a coupla bowls in Saint Mary's parking lot and starts babbling about Adam and Eve having tails. This ain't the tie-dyed brats on the corner with the hacky sacks. This is people I gotta deal with.

So I buys a dog. A drug-sniffing dog. From my ex-wife's friend Jill's husband Ernie, who used to repair walkie-talkies for the DEA. Dog's name's Deke. They say he's a Doberman pinscher but he's as obese as a warhog, has worms and diabetes, and takes about sixty pills a day. But he can sniff out drugs like a goddam Geiger counter.

I opens the door to greet the mailman on Day One and Deke hits the guy chest-high like a linebacker, driving him to the sidewalk on his back, still clutching my ripped-out mailbox in his hand. Deke pounces on the guy's chest like he's about to give him CPR - which he decidedly ain't - and his fangs are at the guy's throat, ready to rip out his adam's apple like a prairie dog out of a hole. "DEKE!" I barks, saving the civil servant's sorry-assed hide; and he gets to his feet, all torn and purple and scared, sputtering about how he's gonna sue me outa my house, sue me outa my car, and have the city dog officer come down and put my "menace to society" to sleep with a 12 gauge shotgun. I just grins and says, "Ol' Dekey here's a drug-sniffing dog, son." And in like three seconds, the guy undergoes a personality change. Practically recites the Act of Contrition. Picks up all his letters and says he'll be by Sunday - his day off, mind you - to re-install my mailbox and clean up the bloodstains all over my steps. "I was always suspicious about that sonovabitch," I tells Deke, as we watch the guy limp back down the street, tucking in his tattered blue shirt. All them times he mixed up my mail with Pauline Breen's, the next door neighbor, and I hadda read all this despicable drivel about her brother Arnie in Lowell who's having a sex change operation and changing his name to Aretha. I scratch Deke's pointed ears, feeling more and more secure by the minute.

By Day Three, I figure he's ready for the leash, and we ain't out there five minutes when he gets into it with a meter maid, rearing up on his hind legs, baying and barking so bad, you'da thought he was reading the lady her rights. No sooner do I steer him outa that quagmire than he's nipping at the heels of Dick Manellian (pillar of the community, owner of Manellian Real Estate and Furs), backing him into an alley like a cornered rodent in a dark blue suit. "Good thing I got this here leash, hop-head," I sneers, and pulls my dog away. At last I can tell who's who and what's what. I am the Man With The X-Ray Eyes.

Through the tangled mass of humanity we prowl, me and my

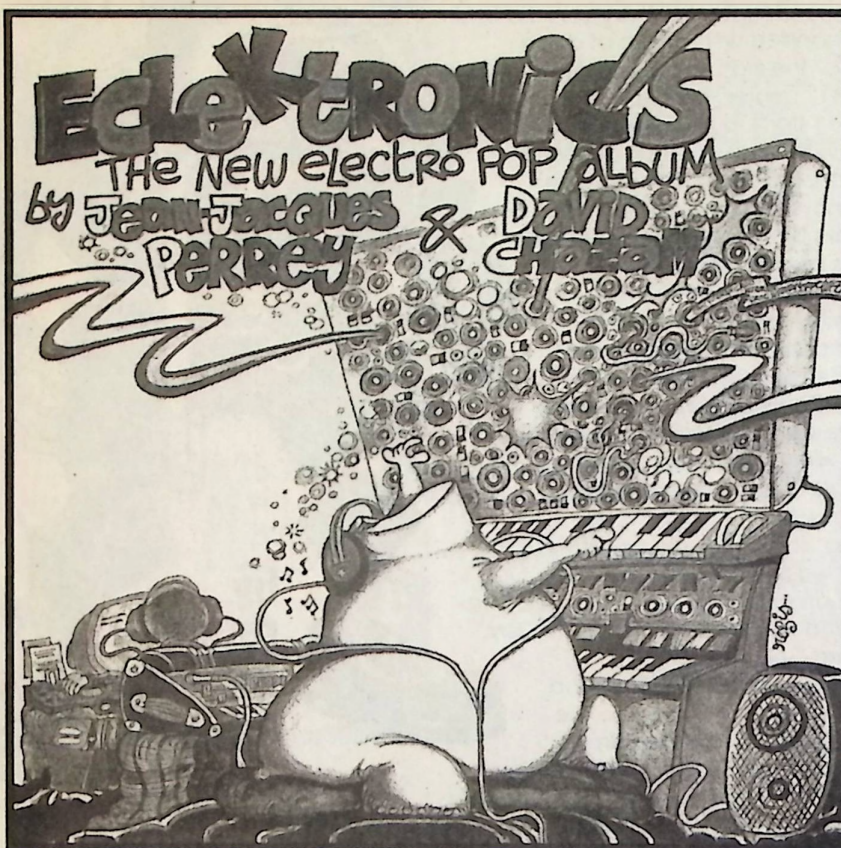


by
raoul
flaherty

drug-sniffing dynamo, herding the "sheep" this way, the "wolves" that, trapping phonies with D.A.R.E. stickers right in their cars, chasing others right across the grass on their well-groomed lawns.

Public Transit? No problem. We climbs aboard the Burghy bus and finds none other than Tee-Jay at the helm, with his earrings and his ponytail and his pubic hair beard. Deke sniffs up and down every inch of his Hawaiin shirt like he's combing for pills in his dog chow. Then he just snorts, shrugs, and lets ol' Tee-Jay live. We takes our seats and I pats my beloved dog on his hairless belly. For once in my life I'm riding on a city bus without a care in the world. I even manages to get in a few z's while Deke stands watch with his nose pressed up against the window, growling at just about every other stiff he sees. Peace of mind is a wonderful thing.

illo by
jim lawson



**JEAN-JACQUES
PERREY &
DAVID CHAZAM
ECLEKTRONICS:
THE NEW ELECTRO
POP ALBUM
Basenotic Records**

Eclektronics is certainly an appropriate title for this record. Electronic music is eclectic enough, and humorous electronic music doesn't even appeal to most electronic fans. So there you have it, an electronic album for fans of the bizarre... which pretty accurately describes anyone who has ever actively sought any album featuring Jean-Jacques Perrey. Perrey turned the musical world on its ear in the mid-sixties when he collaborated with Gershon Kingsley to create the masterful *The In Sound From Way Out*.

That album featured limited

musical accompaniment to a barrage of sampled sounds, including ducks, cows and gurgling babies - all done through Moog synthesizers. They followed with an album that replaced the sampled sounds with the more staid approach of simply playing songs on the Moog synthesizer. The pair went their separate ways, with Kingsley creating the Moog classic, "Popcorn." Perrey continued in the samplaphonic vein, releasing *Moog Indigo*, which featured "E.V.A.," a song which is sampled regularly in the rap world and was recently remixed by Fatboy Slim.

Perrey disappeared from the musical world and was never heard from again. Until now. *Eclektronics* marks Perrey's return from 25 years of seclusion, though it certainly hasn't stunted his vision any. This album picks up where *The In Sound* left off, using a limited musical background to drive his incredibly bizarre sampled-sound montages. Newcomer David Chazam helps to add the contemporary touch, so that at times the album

seems more like modern electronica than electropop. Fans of Perrey need not fear, though, there is enough to remind one of the old style. It's hard not to listen to "What's Up Duck?", for instance, without breaking into a smile over all of the carefully placed quacks, and a break in "An Elephant On The Roof" sounds as if it were lifted directly from *The In Sound*.

The seven songs on this record (actually eight - "Doc Tequil and Mister H" is a song composed of two distinctly different parts) only pan out to about 30 minutes, but considering that it's taken about 25 years to reach us, one should be happy that it even exists at all. It turns out that Jean-Jacques Perrey is currently touring Europe, which may mean that *Eclektronics* is merely a sign of things to come ... and not a moment too soon in this humorless age of correctness.

(Basenotic Records, 1 Rue de Bagnolet, 75020, Paris, France / 33(0)142237072.)

- Phil Straub

SAINT ETIENNE/GOOD HUMOR



**ST. ETIENNE
GOOD HUMOR
Creation/Sub Pop**

Last winter while basking in the relatively breezy climes of the Pioneer Valley, I sent out a St. Etienne compilation to help warm up a friend frozen back in the Midwest. The tape featured a darling picture of the *Sesame Street* gang vacationing (with umbrella drinks no less) in the tropics on the slipcover. I called it "Get Into the Yachting Life" after a

line in an Etienne favorite.

At the time, it looked as if these Brit pop fetishists - marginalized at home and abroad - had broken up, leaving a handful of glorious records and a small clutch of fans. But 1998 sees the release of their fourth 'studio' album and a new launch aimed at a place among the '90s pop elite.

I suppose the hardest thing about Etienne is that they're always so goddamn perky. We don't want our superstars happy; miserable, pissed or melancholy that's the way we like 'em. You don't even have to look at Kurt and Courtney, Trent and Tori, check in with the new darker Madonna, the spastic meanness of much of the ska rehashers, or the weirdly popular pretense queen Natalie Merchant. There's no question about it - for the most part folks ain't feelin' too chipper. In the face of all these bittersweet symphonies, Sub Pop (in a total about-face maneuver) gave St. Etienne a U.S. deal.

Good Humor marks the end of a four-year hiatus, broken by solo projects, single compilations, and the odd bit of remix work. This new full-length is filled with all the Bubbly Goodness™ that sets Etienne apart from their contemporaries. Floating giddy across the dance floor, St. Etienne find their grooves somewhere

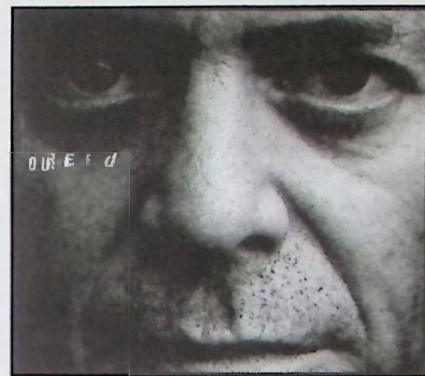
in Abba diva worship, raver smiley face beats, Salon Select shampoo jingles, and Beachy Beatle Boy melodies.

The Etienne team of songwriters Bob Stanley and Pete Wiggs, together with sugary smooth vocalist Sarah Cracknell, have crafted their most cohesive collection yet. Gone is much of the experimental sound collages of their debut, '91s **Foxbase Alpha**, or the sample laden '93 follow-up, **So Tough**. In their place is a fashion magazine of glossy and luxurious pop. From the catty "Slyvie" and the Motown jangle of "Split Screen," to a jazzy clarinet-infused "Been So Long" and the breathy sing-a-long chorus "Erica America," the album overflows with hits dying to be heard.

As autumn sets in, nothing would sound as sweet to my ears as to tune in the radio to the 5pm drive-home and catch the sunshine single, "Lose That Girl," just that week going platinum. If not I'll be contented to send out mix tapes in an attempt to aid Etienne in winning over the world one listener at a time.

The domestic release adds a bonus disc of eleven(!) extra cuts... sometimes patience pays.

(www.saint.etienne.net)
-Stuart Bloomfield



LOU REED PERFECT NIGHT LIVE IN LONDON

Reprise

Lou Reed has been an enigma of the rock 'n roll scene since his first appearance in 1966 with the Velvet Underground. A focal point for critical attention, he continually defies attempts to pigeonhole, define or even explain his chameleon-like existence in the music industry.

From the bleak, methedrine inspired grit of the Velvet Underground, Lou Reed launched himself into a career that resided, however unwillingly, under the micro-

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scope glare of critical attention. This attention (bordering on obsession by some 70's scribes) led to an ambience of public trial/hanging/autopsy upon each of his successive releases. The whirlwind of his life was well documented during this time: forced to get a job and move back into his parents' home by his family, shock treatment, heroin addiction, bisexuality, cohabitation with a transvestite (all coincidentally omitted from his recent PBS documentary). This was the background for some freakish musical excursions during the seventies. The Velvet Underground had devolved from a collaborative project between several minds to essentially a Lou Reed solo project. The transition to solo career would seem to have been a simple thing, but as the threads of his life began to unravel, Lou responded by becoming, well, more colorful. Onstage simulations of shooting up, liaisons with Bowie — the madness finally culminated with the release of 1975's *Metal Machine Music* (four sides of ear-wrecking feedback that was returned in droves by puzzled fans — Lou claimed it was a modern symphony and that no one 'got it' — hmmm...).

From dark disciple of the New York underground to self-parody to elder statesman of decadence, Lou Reed has seen life from every angle. So where does that leave Lou in 1998? Still as wry in his observations as ever, Lou is now presenting himself as a sanitized decadent, a raconteur that is more NPR-friendly than ever. This does not mean, however,

that close listening won't reveal the cobwebs of incest, drug abuse and general sordid living that populates his world. These and other demons are still here, brooding just below the surface. Much of the apparent sanitization has to do with the spartan presentation of the material here.

Perfect Night Live in London is a bare bones approach featuring a sparse band with an extraordinary sounding acoustic guitar as its focal point, pulling Lou's monotone through the highlights of his career. Starting with a chemically sedated, almost resigned tone for "I'll Be Your Mirror," Lou embarks on a fifteen song journey through his career that covers most of the bases of his past and present, but all rearranged in this utilitarian setting. The success of these arrangements speak of the strength of the original songs, and of the power of Lou Reed as an interpreter of his own material.

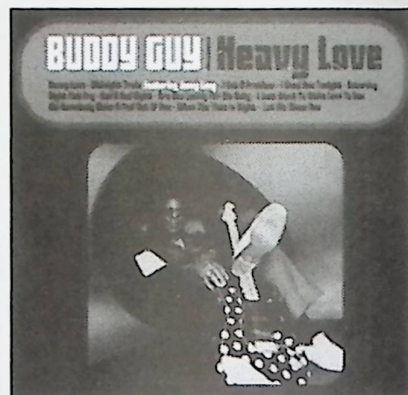
Succeeding almost as much as a commentary on society, *Perfect Night Live* portrays the current incarnation of the Lou Reed persona, and weaves a continuous thread using songs spanning three decades. Like an evil spawn of Lake Wobegone, Lou is instantly both reassuring and threatening, warm and unapproachable, friendly and menacing. Lou sums the undercurrent up well: "You're so vicious, you want me to hit you with a stick, all I've got is this guitar pick" (from "Vicious").

An enjoyable addition to any ongoing Lou Reed collection, it's also a good introduction to the sordid

world of reality for those whose idea of danger consists of staying up late to watch Conan.

(<http://www.loureed.org>)

- Carwreck deBangs



BUDDY GUY HEAVY LOVE

Silvertone

Buddy Guy is a true elder statesman of the blues, having influenced everybody from Clapton to Stevie Ray and *Heavy Love* is about as good as it gets.

From the opening strains of the title cut, you know that you're in store for a megadose of the real McCoy. Next in line is the rockin' "Midnight Train" featuring wunderkind Johnny Lang. Lang growls pretty well for a teenager (or anyone else, for that matter) and makes a most suitable duet partner for Buddy both vocally and as a guitarist. The somber "I Need You Tonight" chills to the bone. Guy tries his skill at jump blues with Louis Jordan's "Saturday Night Fish Fry," meeting with total success. Veteran Reese Wynans tickles the ivories on this one digging up the riff from the *Route 66* TV theme and it fits quite well here.

The inimitable Steve Cropper contributes some additional guitar work on seven cuts, meshing flawlessly with the superb rhythm section of Richie Hayward on drums and David M. Smith on bass. Hot solos are everywhere, especially on "Had A Hard Night" and Willie Dixon's classic "I Just Want To Make Love To

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You." "Are You Lonely For Me Baby" features nonpareil background vocals, but the rest of the tunes are all sung by Buddy himself and he's true to form. "Did Somebody Make A Fool Of You" is a visceral, brooding number with superb acoustic guitar played as only a master like Buddy can. Heartfelt and eerie.

When I first heard him in the sixties, I thought Buddy was as cutting edge as it got. He is still absolutely on top of his game. He always manages to keep ahead of the pack with both material and performance. From his frequent collaborations with the late Junior Wells, to his recent spate of Silvertone recordings commencing with the unequalled ***Damn Right I Got the Blues*** of a couple years ago, Buddy Guy is a true phenomenon. He's a big fish in a very big pond, and is likely to remain as such for years to come.

- Meathook Williams



MARK HOLLIS
MARK HOLLIS
 Polydor UK
PROLAPSE
THE ITALIAN FLAG
 Radar

These discs have very little in common. In fact, at the moment I can only think of three similarities:

1. They're both damn expensive (I shelled out \$25+ for each).
2. They have black and white covers.
3. They're two of the best

albums so far this year.

Let's start with the mellow one. Mark Hollis (former lead man of that hard to pigeonhole oddity Talk Talk) on his first solo record explores softly abstract musical and lyrical landscapes. It's a disc that demands repeated listens and seems to offer something new with each spin.

Hollis favors the loosest of song structures to hang his minimal quasi-religious poetics upon. It is a delicate record but not without rasps of harmonica or bursts of jazz trumpet and clutters of noisy percussion. Hollis carefully manages these elements making them swell perversely and seductively out from his gingerly textured guitar and piano compositions.

Part hopeful, part mournful "The Colour of Spring" (a title that harks back to his Talk Talk years), introduces Hollis' warm somber vocals that will carry the weight and emotion of the songs to come. The midsection of the disc is simply wonderful, beginning with the creepy meanderings of "A Life (1895-1915)" that doubles over itself with nearly subliminal backing vocals that transform into a spooky jazz quartet jam. It's followed by the sparse "Westward Bound" that creates in a few painstakingly chosen words a heartaching tale.

It seems random for Hollis to fade out after a brief 47 minutes, so smooth is the set it's as if you've just listened to someone whose made a great album without even waking up.

Prolapse, on the other hand, fly out of the gate with reckless abandon. "Slash/Oblique" barely contains the rantings of Michael Derrick as he spits out lyrics as if he were a deranged auctioneer or a rabid soap-boxing preacher. He barely takes a breath as the band leaps into "Deanshanger" with Derrick proclaiming in his thick Scottish slang, "*Do you remember the 1980s?... the music was crap/the hair was crap/the clothes were crap/everything was crap.*"

With ***Italian Flag*** (the band's third disc), this six piece shows no sign of slacking off. Tighter structure and more actual singing (opposed to

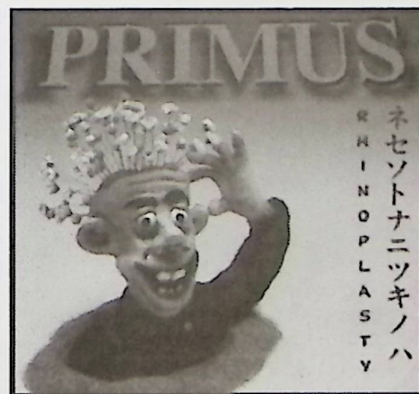
incoherent wailing and menacing growls) make it their most accessible release, but we're hardly talking Michael Bolton here. They sound leaner but no friendlier.

Derrick and co-vocalist, Linda Steelyard, again prove to be a match made in hell as they argue, complain and rant over the others' words. The resulting effect of these exchanges is a bit like crossing that "Dashboard Lights" duet of Meatloaf's with Motorhead's "Ace of Spades." Favorite track - "The Return of Shoes," if for no other reason but it's name.

You can get the Prolapse disc over the net at:
www.music.stayfree.co.uk/prolapse/.
 Hollis' should be available locally. Both are well worth seeking out.

- Stuart Bloomfield

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PRIMUS
RHINOPLASTY
 Insterscope

In my view, Les Claypool is, along with the Chili Peppers' Flea, one of the most inventive bassists working in rock music today. He's also highly twisted.

And, as if we needed further proof of this, ***Rhinoplasty*** has arrived on the scene. It's a combination of cover tunes and two live tracks, including their first big hit "Tommy The Cat" (sadly lacking Tom Waits, but rather nice anyway). The covers include a killer, slower version of "Silly Putty," the old Stanley Clarke tune, and even Jerry Reed's "Amos Moses." Yikes! XTC's "Scissor Man"

**police and thieves
in the street**

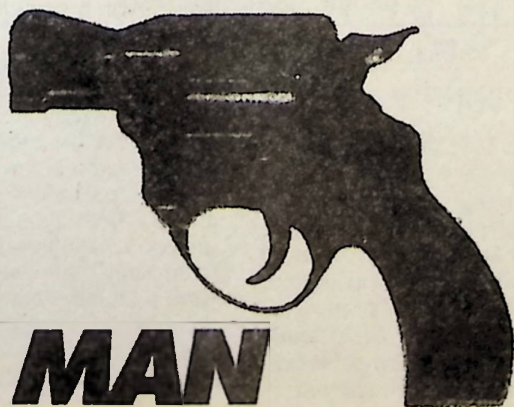
oh yeah

**scaring the nation
with their**

guns and ammunition

fighting the nation

PIECE



MAN

**A VMAG POSTER
BY MURPHY**

M u s i c

is given a sinister treatment and that holds true as well for the Police song "Behind My Camel." A real heavy original, "Too Many Puppies" is one of my faves and sick puppies they are. Claypool's voice is one of the most recognizable around and he almost outdoes himself here. Peter Gabriel's "The Family And The Fishing Net" is reprised here sounding, well, rather unlike the original. Larry LaLonde's guitar shrieks through it all as drummer Brain pounds along.

Primus differs from the usual hard rockers in that they always come off very funky, another trait shared by fellow Californians the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Always striving to be different (no problem), Primus is a true original and their vision continues with this release. The final cut, "Bob's Party Time Lounge" (the other live track) will remove all doubt, with it's virtuoso basslines and Claypool's whining drawl. It's truly psychedelic in the best meaning of the term.

While I don't expect to hear much from this disc on the airwaves, that will be the fault of the radio programmers. Primus definitely deserves better airplay. But, hey, you can buy **Rhynoplasty** for yourself and thus sidestep the problem.

- Meathook Williams



MAS MAMONES AGUAGERO Y PARRANDA Conconjones Records

As anyone who has come in contact with me recently can attest,

I've developed a strong fondness for Mas Mamones. It's not quite an obsession, but it's certainly getting there. Mas Mamones is an Afro-Cuban outfit from New Orleans with an affinity for all things Latin. Their debut album includes cha cha chas, mambos and descargas, which makes them hard to pin down. If anything ties their sound together, it's the driving force of the percussionists. They are never far from the foreground, and help to create a sound that's so enticing that it's hard not to find one's body unconsciously swaying to the beat. My personal favorite song on the record is their boogaloo. "Hey Boogaloo" is propelled along by a funky bassline and accented with a loping horn section that simply exudes a swampy humidity. This song just seems made for the outdoors, to be enjoyed in a large crowd with the sun beating down and everyone moving back and forth, slightly intoxicated by the beat. Lastly, those with a fondness for all things Disney will no doubt recognize "Quiero Ser Como Tu" as a rough translation of Louis Prima's classic "I Wanna Be Like You" from *The Jungle Book*.

Mas Mamones is a great band, and it'll be great to see what the future holds for them. In the meantime, you would do well to seek out **Aguagero Y Parranda**, released on their own label, Conconjones Records (118 South Scott Street, New Orleans, LA 70119 / 514.484.6985).

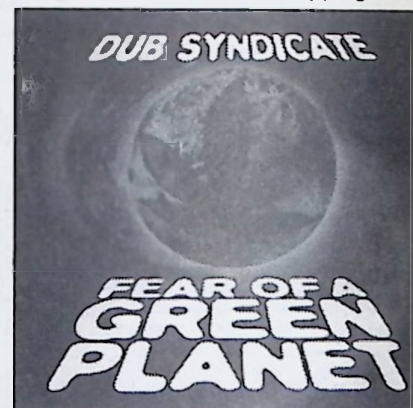
- Phil Straub

DUB SYNDICATE FEAR OF A GREEN PLANET

Shanachie

Continuing their tradition of massive dub albums, Lincoln "Style" Scott and Adrian Sherwood et al, have released yet another dub masterpiece, ***Fear Of A Green Planet***. At once both roots oriented and cutting edge, this is certainly one of my favorites to date. First of all, instead of keyboard bass, Dub Syndicate opts for the real thing. In this case that

would be the formidable Earl "Flabba" Holt, one of the handfull of bass guitar giants in reggae music. He is the mainstay of this adventuresome group and sounds his best here. Another welcome addition is international trancemeister Bill Laswell, bringing the guitarist count to a whopping five!



Of course, this isn't a guitar album. Like with most dub albums the bass and percussion do most of the talking, and leader Scott bashes all sorts of percussion with wild but controlled abandon. Another nice touch that sets this one apart from the pack is the inclusion of violin. Pristine sampling makes it all the better, and though it's not the first use of this instrument in the reggae milieu, to my mind it's the most effective use of a non-traditional (in reggae, at least) instrument since Keith Hudson included pedal steel guitar on some of his mid-seventies recordings.

Vocal legends Big Youth and Little David turn up on "Emmanuel" for a nice interblend of urban and churchical styles. And the anthemic "Wake Up" makes for a nice closer, leaving you hungry for more, as closers should.

This recording is both specially huge and warmly inviting. And there's no overly tricky bullshit to detract from the mood. This is without a doubt some of the best dub ever; dark and delectable. Only reggae mogul Lee Perry is as consistant and prolific. Back in the days of dub originator King Tubby, records like this were a bit more common. But in recent years, so much of this music has become trite and/or gimmicky. Not so with this outfit. They know how

R e v i e w s

to keep it simple and powerful, but at the same time on the leading edge. If you're even a marginal dub fan, this savory blend is essential.

- Meathook Williams

ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT RFTC InterScope

If an alien spacecraft landed in your back yard and demanded to know once and for all — What is rock 'n roll, and what is all the fuss about? — what would you tell them? How could one possibly encapsulate all the angst, fury, subtlety and just plain adrenaline charge that a particularly effective album can provide?

Perhaps the new album release by Rocket From the Crypt would suffice to keep the little bug-eyed gray marshmallows happy. **RFTC**, their second major label release, is an excellent follow-up to their initial major label burst, the supercharged epic **Scream Dracula Scream**. The opening track, "Eye On You," with guest vocalist Holly

Golightly, continues the horn-powered post-punk manifesto they declared on their last release. Shedding their punk image was an extremely risky move, considering they travel in circles where a change in diet can trigger an instant drop in record sales.

They do their damndest to get all the grit and stage sweat of a pulsing live show condensed onto a little aluminum circle. Snippets of past riffs are incorporated into various songs, from the Beatles' "Revolution" intro cranking up the beginning of "Break It Up," Santana riffs mingling comfortably within "You Gotta Move," and culminating with the appropriation of their own stuff ("On A Rope" from **Dracula** is retooled nicely as "I Know").

Following the formula of their last release, **RFTC's** songs come without pause between them, instantly hurtling the listener into the next funhouse room before the vehicle has come to a complete stop. This sensory overload without a break helps create a thrill ride ambience throughout the record.

An excellent distillation of

many elements of rock history, **RFTC** is a good introduction to the band for those whose tastes lean towards smoky bars, sideburns, DA's, and whiskey. Hopefully the little gray men will pop this sucker into their spacecraft's ROM, 'cuz it would definitely overload that mother into a supernova explosion somewhere between Mars and Jupiter, lighting up the region for parsecs all around. That would show 'em what rock 'n roll really is.

(**RFTC**: POB 33723, San Diego CA, 92163-3723, www.rftc.com)

- Carwreck deBangs



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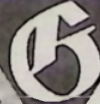
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the crime beat

phil straub

Everyone needs a little background music in their life, and criminals are no exception. In fact, if you're thinking of walking on the wild side, then theme music is a downright necessity. Sure, people look back nostalgically on the visual medium, but it's the musical background that really triggers the emotion. Some crappy scene in a dank, poorly lit alleyway can be turned into art simply by including some nasty sounding musical backing track. Music is often used as a pair of jumper cables, telling us how to feel and when. Of course, like most drugs, if not used judiciously, music can kill the moment. It can be overbearing, trite or simply wrong ... depending on what you got. But we were speaking of crime.

Think of the best crime shows, the best crime movies ... and you can bet there's a classic soundtrack pushing the action forward. No namby-pamby stuff laden with strings and filling you with remorse. No sir. It's full-blown, hard edged, horns blaring, drums kicking, guitars struggling to keep up ... because that's crime. It's an adrenaline rush, knowing that you're doing wrong, that at any moment, things can go sour and suddenly you're (at best) behind bars or (at worst) being sketched out in chalk.

All musical genres have been attracted by the bright light of crime: blues, jazz, pop, folk. Hell, even bluegrass music has been used to eulogize the plight of gangsters and bank robbers. It's all good, baby. Anything that gets you going is fair game. So what do you do? Where do you start? If this were the fifties, then you'd want some hot horn section knocking some sense into the chump next to you, letting them know what you're all about. Turn off your sensible side, run to the store and pick up *The Crime Scene*, Volume Seven of Capitol's *Ultra-Lounge Series*. I bet you thought I'd say lift it ... well, I thought about it, but in this day and age of the litigious society, it's all too easy to be an "ignorant" accessory, so forget about it. I may obsess over crime, but I don't advocate it. So get back on track.

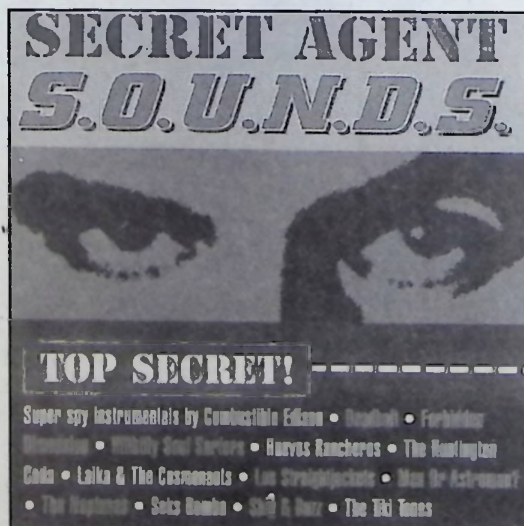
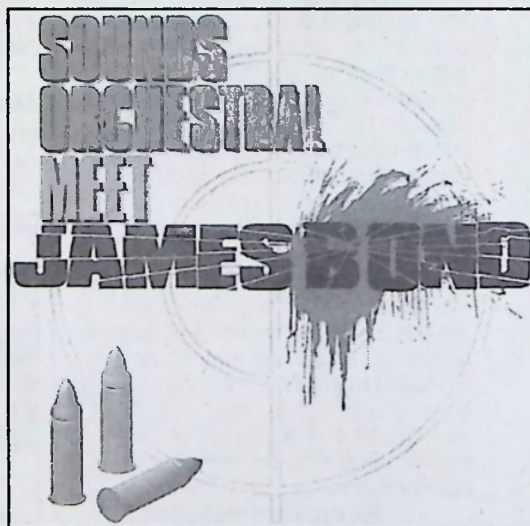
Anyway, the *Ultra-Lounge* series is the best thing to come out of Capitol in years, and is one of the most consistently excellent multi-volume

collections going. Each CD is thematic in scope, and pulls from Capitol's archives. Not enough glowing words can be applied to Brad Benedict, producer and person responsible for this ever-expanding beast. What this guy does is scour all of the crappy records in Capitol's archives, pull out the gems and put them together in a fancy package chock-full of coolness. Finally, somebody's doing it right. This series is filled with cheese, and not just Velveeta. It's all here, the best and the brightest. Mostly covers, some straightforward, some way off-base, but all are enough to get you going. "The Peter Gunn Theme," for example, is downplayed and reinterpreted by Ray Anthony, but not before he blows it apart and puts it together into an operatic eight-minute suite. There's "Harlem Nocturne," a pleasant little downbeat

swing interpreted by Spike Jones's Big Band, and Count Basie's version of "From Russia With Love." I think that's off of the less-than-thrilling album, *Basie meets Bond*. Of course, the theme to *Dragnet* is here, as well as *I Spy* and *Mission Impossible*. Perhaps the highlight, though, is the title track from Alfred Hitchcock's ultra-rare, *Music To Be Murdered By*. It is,

as they say, music in a jugular vein.

Of course, when you flip to the good side of crime, the best players are the secret agents. It can't be



the cops - they're too close to reality, and besides, they're inundated with paperwork. You have to account for every bullet and file everything in triplicate - how exciting is that? Plus, it's too easy to be unhappy with cops. Alternative culture has been badmouthing the boys (and girls) in blue for far too many years to count. They are, after all, merely agents of THE MAN. But secret agents, that's another story. They get to go to exotic locales, they have lots of sex, they can insult

their bosses and they have a license to kill. There's no paperwork, neither. Itemizing their ammunition? Forget about it. If that weren't enough, they get to play with secret codes and scrambled messages. That's what's so great about **Secret Agent S.O.U.N.D.S.** on Mai Tai Records - the CD itself is a code ring that allows you to crack all the cool messages they give you in the booklet. The collection itself is heavy on the low register, heavy reverb guitar sounds of days of yore - inspired by such bands as Dick Dale and the Deltones, The Ventures and Davie Allan and the Arrows. Who's on the album? Only the way-hip out of the cool-crew collective - Laika & the Cosmonauts, Man or Astroman?, Combustible Edison and the like. There are some covers - like Deadbolt's surfy interpretation of "the James Bond Theme" and "You Only Live Twice" - but, mostly, this record is filled with original (albeit 'inspired') compositions that evoke a spy-vs-spy atmosphere - like Los Straitjackets' "G-Man" or Huevos Rancheros' "Smart Bomb".

If the spy game is up your alley, but surfin' ain't your game, then check out **Sounds Orchestral Meet James Bond** on Sequel Records. This record was originally released sometime

after the third Bond flick, *Goldfinger*, and was therefore forced to draw inspiration from Ian Fleming's actual books. As a result, we are given music for *Moonraker*, *You Only Live Twice* and others, but delivered in a jazzy, small group style obviously inspired by John Barry's early soundtracks. As an added bonus, the music is driven by drummer Kenny Clarke and punctuated by a variety of sound effects.

Finally, we take a quick trip to the other side of the tracks and take a look at **Superfly**, a movie with a dope dealer as its protagonist. This beautiful movie was



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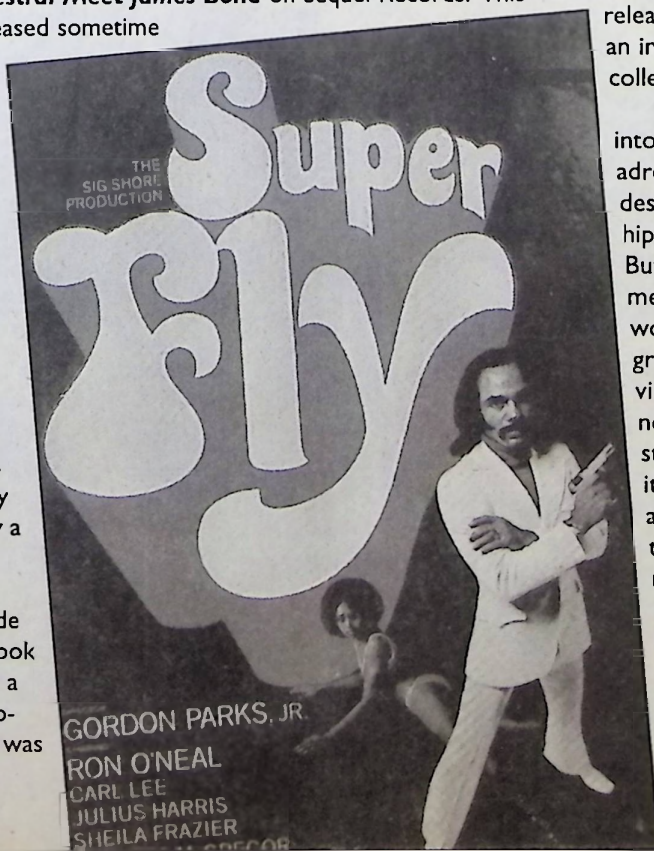
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perhaps the feather in the blaxploitation movement's cap, and certainly one of the first films to show just how financially viable a soundtrack could be. The singles alone, "Pusherman" and "Freddie's Dead," sold a million copies each, and the record still sells well today. Of course, it does feature the most excellent Curtis Mayfield, and that may be part of it. Rhino Records recently released a two-CD set, which includes single versions (slightly different than the versions included on the album), instrumental tracks deemed unnecessary on the original release (the gall!), commercials and an interview. A fine addition to any collection.

Well, that's it - a quick trip into the world of crime-infested, adrenaline-induced super beats designed for the seedy, the super-hip and all the suckers in between. But that, my friends, is by no means all there is. There's a world of hurt captured in the grooves of the multitudinous vinylcity. If there's a crime that needs to be committing (or stopping, for that matter), then it's a safe bet that there's already been recorded a piece that's an exquisite accompaniment for it. So keep a quick shifty eye to the street and an ear to the grindstone, and you might yet stumble across your perfect match.



interesting failures in film available on video

Guilty Pleasures

michael charles hill

THIEF [1981]

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MICHAEL MANN
STARRING: JAMES CAAN, TUESDAY WELD,
JAMES BELUSHI, ROBERT PROSKY
AND WILLIE NELSON

Michael Mann's [HEAT, THE KEEP, and MAN-HUNTER] first directorial effort features James Caan [THE GAMBLER, HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT, and THE KILLER ELITE] as Frank, a professional thief, and the quintessential anti-hero in this neo film noir.

Loosely adapted from the non-fiction book, THE HOME INVADERS, by Frank Hohimer, written in 1975 while he was serving a prison term for his past exploits, THIEF chronicles Frank's efforts to create his ultimate "life" - complete with the picture-perfect wife, the picture-perfect child, and the picture-perfect home.

But to accomplish this, Frank must do what he does best — put down scores. Big scores. Scores that will net him and his partner; Barry, played by Jim Belushi [GANG RELATED, RED HEAT, and SALVADOR], hundreds of thousands of dollars a night. His specialty is breaking into safes, stealing diamonds and cash - no furs, no coin collections, no stock certificates, no treasury bonds, no cartage, and definitely no "cowboy shit" or "home invasions".

And for a while, everything is going according to Hoyle — Frank owns a used car lot and a bar, wears \$800 suits and a perfect, D-flawless, three-carat diamond ring, and drives a brand new Cadillac every month, — that is until one of Frank's fences, Joe Gags, is whacked by a local

Chicago mobster named Attaglia.

Frank confronts Attaglia and informs him that Joe Gags was holding his money [\$180,000] when he went out a twelve-story window. But Attaglia could care less — until Frank pulls out his .45 automatic and tells him: "I am the last guy in the world that you want to fuck with!"

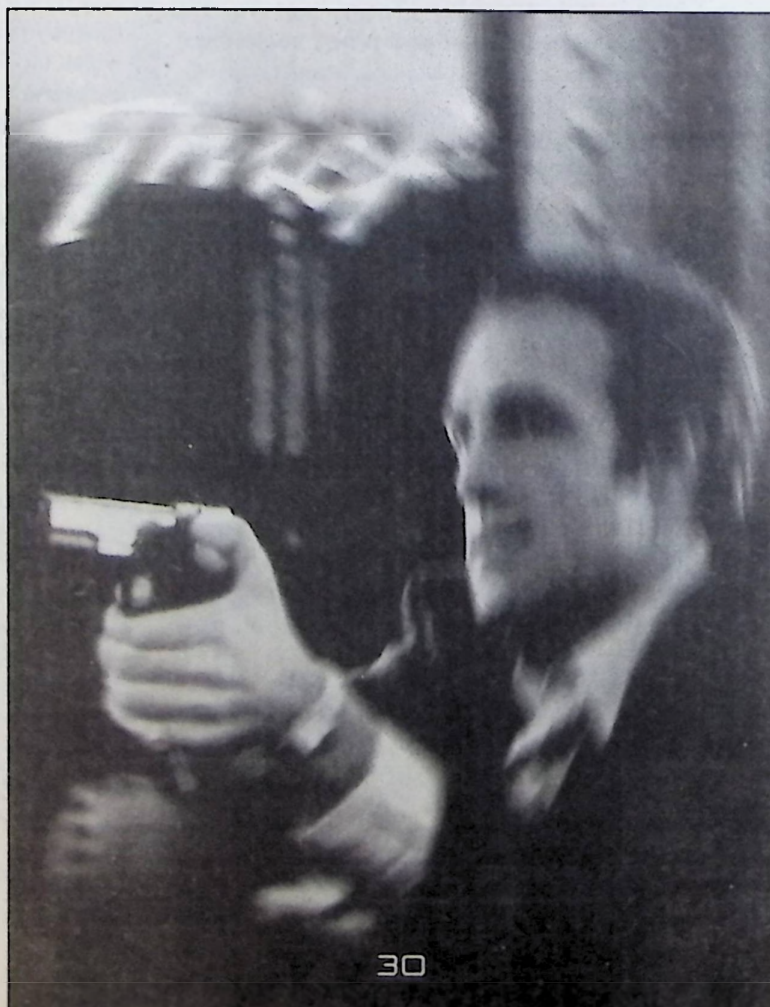
No truer words were spoken. This was the mob's first mistake. And had the mob guys heeded his warning, this would have been a very short film.

Needless to say, Attaglia and his boss, Leo, played by Robert Prosky [THE KEEP, THE LORDS OF DISCIPLINE, and THINGS CHANGE] return Frank's money and offer him a job. Reluctant at first, Frank realizes that this is an opportunity to fulfill his dreams on a much tighter time-table.

So Frank, who has always been a loner, agrees to work for Leo, who will set up the scores and fence the merchandise afterwards. Frank's end will be proportionally smaller, but the scores will be bigger and he will have

no overhead. Plus, he knows exactly what his cut will be beforehand.

Meanwhile, Frank is busy courting Jessie, a hostess at a local coffee shop, played by Tuesday Weld [PLAY IT AS IT LAYS, PRETTY POISON, and WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN] in an effort to complete his "life", and is busy trying to get his mentor/surrogate father, "Okla", played by Willie Nelson [BARBAROSA, HONEYSUCKLE ROSE, and THE RED-HEADED STRANGER] out of prison. Okla has a heart disease, and is afraid that he will die in prison before his parole comes



through.

Frank ultimately marries Jessie, buys a brand new house in an upper-class neighborhood in suburban Chicago, adopts a child, and secures Okla's early parole, only to have Okla die before he is released.

In the meantime, Chicago's finest, members of the police department's S.C.U. [Special Crimes Unit] pinch Frank and demand ten percent of his action. But Frank is a stand-up guy and takes his beating and walks out of the precinct. And while he prepares for his first score for Leo, the cops hound him day and night, hoping to catch him in the act and give them a reason to whack him. Frank successfully outsmarts them and heads out to Los Angeles with Barry to do their first score for Leo — and the biggest score of their lives.

Upon their return from a well deserved vacation after the success of the L.A. job, Frank arrives at Leo's house for what he is counting on as a big pay day, but he soon discovers that he has been double-crossed. When confronted, Leo threatens Frank's life and everyone he knows and loves. This was the mob's second mistake.

Frank reverts back to the man he was in prison. A man who doesn't care about himself or anyone else. This is the mental attitude he needs to survive and he is willing to die in the process.

After sending Jessie and David away, he burns down his used car lot and blows up his new house, as well as his bar, and heads back over to Leo's house for a final showdown.

So much for honor among thieves.

While Tuesday Weld's character, Jessie, serves little function above and beyond being an outlet for Frank's expositional recounting of his early years in prison, Willie Nelson, delivers a small, yet bravura, performance, especially in the scene where Frank asks Okla for advice regarding his courtship of Jessie — "Lie to no one", he says, "If they're somebody close to you, you are going to ruin it with a lie. And if they are a stranger, who the fuck are they that you got to lie to?" What better advice can a father give a son?

Michael Mann, who won kudos for his last film, HEAT, was virtually ignored when this [pre-MIAMI VICE and pre-CRIME STORY] film was released. In addition

to the spectacular performances by all of the above-mentioned actors, THIEF is exquisitely photographed by Donald E. Thorin [AGAINST ALL ODDS, MID-NIGHT RUN, and SCENT OF A WOMAN]

and has a riveting sound track by Tangerine Dream [THE KEEP, NEAR DARK, and SORCERER].

And, if you look real closely, you will see Dennis Farina [GET SHORTY, MIDNIGHT RUN, and OUT OF SIGHT] and William L. Petersen [AMAZING GRACE and CHUCK, MANHUNTER, and TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.] in their first screen roles.

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One movie stands out from the rest of the summer '98 harvest of mutant monsters, asteroids, alien plots and lethal weaponry. Who would have thought Steven Spielberg could grab audiences with a vintage WWII film like *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*? The movie may be about a 50-year-old war, but it has the bracing ring of authenticity. What to make of that authenticity is the question.

It's been 20 years since *THE DEER HUNTER* and *COMING HOME* began a decade-long cinematic deconstruction of war in the context of a conflict that divided the nation and raised disturbing questions about U.S. foreign policy. After movies like Roland Joffe's *THE KILLING FIELDS* (1984), Oliver Stone's *PLATOON* (1986) and Stanley Kubrick's *FULL METAL JACKET* (1987), it didn't seem possible that audiences could ever again watch war movies without a certain revulsion at such primitive, often misguided methods of conflict resolution.

No such conundrums muddy the waters when it comes to World War II. That war represents the last world-wide struggle between good and evil. It was a war that had to be fought, and only an idealist would argue that military conflict can

be banished from the world. Since then, warfare has become regionalized by nuclear weapons. What goes on in places like Bosnia and Rwanda is too confusing and complex to make into epic movies, but WW II remains a natural.

Spielberg's father was a WW II Air Force radio operator, and the director has tried his hand at WW II movies before. Made in 1979 and set in Los Angeles, the comedy *1941* was a bomb. *EMPIRE OF THE SUN* (1987), only a little better, romanticizes war by looking at it through a boy's eyes in Shanghai. Recent WW II films like Alan Parker's *COME SEE THE PARADISE* (1990), Agnieszka Holland's *EUROPA EUROPA* (1991) and Keith Gordon's *A MIDNIGHT CLEAR* (1992) stay away from battlefields and examine the conflict in terms of its personal toll. The same tack was taken just two years ago by *THE ENGLISH PATIENT*, as it moved between Italy and the Sahara with the lives of a war nurse and a mortally burned cartographer. Winning nine Academy Awards, *THE ENGLISH PATIENT* sent a signal to Hollywood and may have set the stage for a full-fledged return to the WW II era.

Already lined up right behind *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN* are two more new WW II films: *COMBAT*, starring Bruce Willis, and *WITH WINGS AS EAGLES*, featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger. When superheroes like Willis and Schwarzenegger show up on the marquee, WW II looks like a trend, and the lines between movie authenticity and fantasy start to blur.

Nevertheless, *SAVING PRI-*

VATE RYAN is the first film to plunge viewers directly into the bloodbath of the Allied invasion of Normandy since *THE LONGEST DAY* (1962). That epic told the story from American, French, British and German eyes with a star-studded cast headed by John Wayne, Richard Burton, Robert Mitchum and Henry Fonda. In *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*, Germans mow down our boys before they even hit the beach in a much-noted maelstrom of blown-off body parts and blood-soaked surf. Even the fish lie dead on Spielberg's Omaha Beach.

The movie's problems with authenticity begin with the story line, which is built around a search for the last of four soldiers still alive from the same family. Spielberg has General George Marshall quote Abraham Lincoln to justify the Ryan family's loss as a "sacrifice made on the altar of freedom" and to explain his dubious decision to rescue the fourth Ryan. As Capt. John Miller, Tom Hanks heads a team of eight Rangers sent inland from Omaha Beach to find Matt Damon's Pvt. James Francis Ryan, part of the pre-D-Day air drop into Normandy, and send him safely home. Hanks's squad includes Tom Sizemore of *THE DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS* and *NATURAL BORN KILLERS*; Edward Burns, director and star of *SHE'S THE ONE* and *THE BROTHERS McMULLEN*; and lesser-known independent film actors Jeremy Davies, Barry Pepper, Giovanni Ribisi, Adam Goldberg and Vin Diesel. Ted Danson also puts in an appearance.

After Vietnam, high-minded metaphors about sacrifices on the altar of freedom seem suspect, and the plan to rescue the one remaining Ryan — no matter what the cost in lives — is a bit of Nineties-style public relations. Not a subtle or cerebral director, Spielberg contemporizes the story with a return visit to Normandy by the elderly Private Ryan. This sentimental framing device, complete with opening and

closing closeups of a gauzy American flag, asks us to pull out the Kleenex. It undercuts the more genuine moments in *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*. A shot of raindrops falling on a single leaf turns the Ranger mission gooey. Even in the powerful opening scene on Omaha Beach, there are missteps like the clumsily rendered attempt of a soldier whose arm has been blown off to pick the limb up and carry it with him.

The point is not simply to complain about Steven Spielberg's moviemaking. It is to remind ourselves how difficult it is to make such a movie without glorifying war. The danger of *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*, laden with patriotism, lies in its potential for retrieving the war-movie genre from a bitter crop of Vietnam movies and encouraging us to think of war as a messy but inevitable undertaking.

At the heart of war and movies about it like *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN* lies a paradox. It is exposed there in a quote from Emerson by one of the Rangers: "War educates the senses, calls into action the will, perfects the physical constitution, brings men into such swift and close collision in critical moments that man measures man." In other words, war may be hell, but it builds character.

Physical conflict, Emerson suggests, serves to define heroism and masculine values. Is war really the white man's game shown in *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*? What about the *WACS*, *WAVES* and other enlisted women who played a role in *VW II*? What about the black regiments? Always the great popularizer, Spielberg paints with over-broad brush strokes. That encourages us to ignore the distinction of heroism and just wars from the kind of political opportunism that sent American soldiers to Grenada.

Movies train their lenses on reality in powerful and potentially distorting ways, and war movies tread on treacherous ground when they

justify war. Some wars should never be fought. Nor are war movies ever just about war. The old-fashioned values promoted by *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN* don't all have relevance for the late '90s. They could end up legitimating a camaraderie and power structure that exclude women and minorities.

At least Francis Ford Coppola's *APOCALYPSE NOW*, messy and overblown, shows the true madness of warfare. For that matter, I'll take *M*A*S*H* or *DR. STRANGELOVE* over *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN* any time.



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BIG BITCH

ASK

Alas, summer's almost gone, but that doesn't mean sex in the Valley is cooling off! The Five Colleges are back in session, and that means plenty of hot guys and yummy girls will be getting together in every possible combination in those ivy-covered halls. Big Bitch remembers her golden college days at the University of Wisconsin, and that hard-earned 4.0. Yes, BB is a simple Midwestern girl. She got her A's the old-fashioned way: by sleeping with TA's, professors and anyone who had notes from all the classes she skipped. But of course, this kind of thing never, ever happens around here... Enough reminiscing. On to the questions:

Dear Big Bitch:

I am a twenty-something lesbian who has recently moved to Northampton from Orono, Maine. I've been to the Grotto and the Haymarket and every women's bookstore in between, but I've been unable to meet the kind of woman I'm looking for. I even put a personal ad in *The Advocate*, but to no avail. Please, Big Bitch, tell me, where can I meet sex-positive lesbians with a sense of humor, who aren't looking for an LTR and who want to fuck first and talk later?

-Horny in Noho

San Francisco.
Bon voyage.

Dear Big Bitch,

We are outraged that in your last column you encouraged a young womyn to deform her goddess-given beauty by removing the hair from her vulvic region. Acts of self-mutilation such as the one you suggest (and worse!) are a means by which the patriarchy has historically maintained its hegemony over wimmin's physical and emotional selves. So-called wimmin such as you with your shaved legs, armpits and wherever else it is you remove hair from,

are a disgrace to the free wimmin of the Valley.

-Echinacea Henbane
Valley Wimmin's Coalition
for Natural Hair Advocacy

Echinacea, Dahling,
Does this mean you don't want to help me pluck my eyebrows?

Dearest Big Bitch,

I'll be in the Valley this fall to visit some old friends. I mean, I really hate the Valley (you're all a bunch of clog-wearing, whole-grain, natural-fiber, tree huggers), but I might as well make the best of it while I'm here. Right? So where can I find the best college students to have mind-blowing sex with?

-Uma Thurman
Sex-Goddess Valhalla
Your Dreams

Dear Uma,
Well, the UMASS dudes are hunky, and the Hampshire guys are hot. And the Amherst boys in their brand new Porsches make their girlfriends come a lot... but for licking pussy and some red hot nookie there's just one place you should know: I wish they all could be Mount Holyoke girls.

So-called Big Bitch:

What about us? We're hot! Really we are. We're sure as hell hotter than those Mount Holyoke girls! We'll show Uma a good time! Really.

-Outraged Smithy

Dear O. S.,
So she won't have to waste her valuable time, Uma has asked me to "interview" possible "escorts" for her visit. Please take a number.

Dear Big Bitch,

Hey! What about us? Not

"Discipline's my middle name, and nobody comes back the same from Bitch School."

everyone at Mount Holyoke and Smith is a lesbian. I mean, there are some heterosexual women here!

-Three Mount Holyokers &
Four Smithies

Dear Magnificent Seven,
According to my calculations, that brings the combined MHC/Smith total to nine. Let me know if you run across any more.

Dear BB,

We, the brothers of the ancient and honorable fraternity of Theta Beta Pi are writing to ask your help. We want to put our rush week really over the top this year. We're thinking of something real classy, like taking pledges to a strip club. We know you've danced, so what do you recommend?

-Skipper and Biff
Rush Week Committee
Theta Beta Pi
(We're the ones with the burned couch on our lawn)

Dear B & S,
I'm glad you asked. For serious strip-ping in the Valley, you've got three real choices. If you're looking for rough and tumble, hot and nasty, try Mardi Gras in Springfield. At squeaky-clean ("We're a Gentleman's Club!") Anthony's in South Hadley, you'll find madel-beauty lovelies dancing for lawyers and accountants on expense accounts. But if I were the one putting up the dollars, I'd head straight up Route 5 to Whately's legendary Castaway Lounge. Super-hot, extra-friendly babes who give great private dance (pursuant, of course, to the laws of the Commonwealth.) Make sure you always tip generously, and say hi to Jimmy! Tell him Big Bitch sent you.

(Confidential to Queen Bee: Tell that bitch to get her shit and get out of there!)

Remember: ASK BIG BITCH needs your letters to keep her hot and wet (and this column alive!) Send your queries to Big Bitch, c/o VMAG, via e-mail at: "vcromag@aol.com"



Q: Is it true that if you steal something and put it back that you can't be arrested?

- J.L., Charlemont

Not exactly.

In Massachusetts in order for a misappropriation of valuables to be a larceny there must be an intent to permanently deprive someone of items of value.

If, for example, you are the bookkeeper of a large corporation and you manage to "borrow" a million dollars from the company accounts over the weekend, go to the track and bet with it, and you replace it promptly Monday morning you have, technically at least, not committed larceny in Massachusetts.

On the other hand the fact that no theft has occurred does not mean that the company cannot fire you for unethical behavior.

Furthermore, prosecutors may make the argument that because the company lost the interest they would have made on the million had it been left in the account over the weekend they have been "permanently deprived" of something of value. If, however, you won big at the track and you pay the money back with interest you cannot be charged with larceny. Which is not to say that they won't find something else that they can charge you with.

Q: Since they have found that there are planets outside the solar system, does that mean that there is a better chance for there being alien life out there?

- S.B., Amherst

Thus far the existence of planets outside our solar system is still largely speculative. Some astronomers who have made preliminary observations believe that they have found evidence of gas giants circling nearby stars and one researcher in California believes that she may have photographed a super gas giant that was flung out of a young binary star system hundreds of light years from Earth. (A light year is roughly 6 trillion miles.)

Once the preliminary observations have been con-



firmed we can all celebrate the existence of these distant planetary neighbors and I personally think we should throw a really big party to commemorate the event.

I have been told by several astronomers that the current evidence for extra solar planets is quite good and that the likelihood of the existence of such planets should not be all that surprising.

Given that there are around 100 billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy, if only 10 percent of those stars had planets it would still mean 100 million planetary systems.

I will go farther and say that if only one percent of the planetary systems have some form of life, under our previous assumption, that would leave us with around 1 million alien life forms. That's a lot of space fungus.

Although, at the moment, the only planets we know of are gas giants and therefore could not support the existence of anything we would recognize as life, I am told that techniques and technologies are being developed that will serve to detect Earth-size planets and may even be able to detect life on those worlds based on the gases in their atmospheres.

Apparently, certain combinations and concentrations of gases are only likely to occur in the presence of life.

(Questions for Mr. Smarty Pants can sent via vcromag@aol.com or POB 774, Northampton, MA 01061.)



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THE NURSE IS IN

JESSICA
FALLER-
BERGER
R.N.

Have you ever asked yourself, "What was he thinking when he disemboweled that Chihuahua?" Ever sit back and wonder, "Now, what makes a fellow wake up, brush his teeth and decide, 'Well today looks like a nice day to hold up a Kenny Rogers Country Style Chicken and slice someone's fingers off?'" Maybe you've even answered yourself, "Say, did a testosterone bomb explode in his brain?" Perhaps you're environmentally conscious: "It could've been the water." You could be a contemplative football fan, musing that, "He could've got kicked upside his head too many times." Then again, suppose that Genetics is your bag. In that case you might comment, "Some folks are just born mutants."

Well, not surprisingly, any one of these suppositions contain modicums of truth. As we speak, avalanches of scientific evidence cascade around our ears, confirming the casually aforementioned causalities of crime. So, might an uzi-wielding illiterate blame his barbarism on industrial toxins? Perhaps. Scientists are beginning to sift through the neurophysiological elements which might repaint the psyche into a murderous landscape. Such findings speak to the origins of crime in the human mind. But I warn you, what appears here is merely a brisk stab at a vast body of information.

A mysterious configuration of character traits, endogenous chemicals, exogenous toxins and genetic factors contribute to the eruption of violence. Human characteristics associated with violence include: impulsiveness, depression, thrill-seeking, poor frustration tolerance, and low IQ. Likewise, to head for a life of crime, one generally must lack in conscience, remorse, foresight, and empathy for others. These apparently normal characteristics are integral to the villainous lifestyle. Keep this in mind

as we catalogue the abnormal biochemical insults that might transform a peaceful but thrill-seeking bumbler into a demonic Jack the Ripper.

Genetic theories of criminal behavior abound. Some researchers attribute violence to a "mutation of the gene that codes for monoamine oxidase-A, an enzyme that metabolizes the brain chemicals serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine" (Cases et al, *Science*, 1995 / Brunner, 1993). These scholars observed

the abuse. In fact, head injuries play a major role in the expression of explosive violence. One study by Otnow-Lewis of the NYU School of Medicine cites an "unusually high number of severe head injuries in death row felons" (1995). A related study by Rosenbaum et al discovered that men who batter their wives are 6 times more likely than peaceful husbands to have a history of head injury. Hopefully, clarifying what engenders criminal behavior will elucidate

more effective treatment modalities for the ethically-challenged brutes roaming our midst.

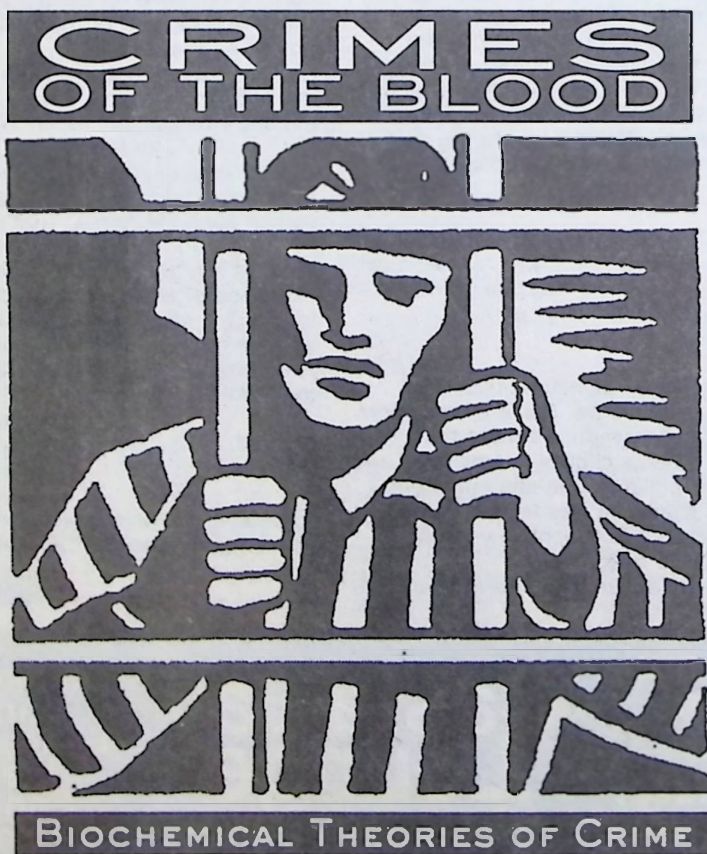
What do Charles Manson, James Oliver Hubertz, and serial killer Henry Lee Lucas all have in common? According to William Walsh, founder of the Health Research Institute, these three men each exhibit "Type B pattern abnormalities, meaning that they share common biochemical abnormalities of the blood." Specifically, these killers all demonstrated "high levels of blood histamine, low levels of zinc, high levels of lead, and a depressed copper-to-sodium ratio" (Ibid). Other chemicals thought to contribute to criminal behavior include lead, iron, manganese, serotonin, cholesterol, testosterone, and uric acid. Study after study bears out biochemical oddities in the brains

and blood of criminals. This leads to the supposition that criminals' grossly abnormal biochemical profiles mirror their pathologically aberrant conduct.

Consider this:

Australian crime rates disproportionately high near manganese mines (Crinella, University of California, 1996).

Exposure to airborne manganese, a gasoline additive produced by



increased aggression in subjects suffering from genetic mutations affecting this enzyme. Brunner's study subjects committed crimes of arson and attempted rape, while Cases' mice exhibited bizarrely aggressive behaviour.

But why do some victims of aggression become perpetrators of violence, while others do not? Perhaps the answer depends upon whether the sufferer incurred serious head injury during

the Ethyl Corporation, can cause psychosis, neurological disease, movement disorders, speech impairment, and even death. In four separate studies, exceptionally high levels of manganese were discovered in the hair of violent criminals. Recalling that low IQ is a risk factor for criminal behavior, the detection of high manganese levels in learning disabled children foretells an ominous fate for these young unfortunates. Likewise, work completed by Roger Masters of Dartmouth corroborates Crinilla's data, once again correlating high manganese levels to crime. Furthermore, animal studies have linked manganese to violence through an idiopathic reduction in the neurotransmitter, serotonin. If these studies are correct, then manganese is a neurotoxic chemical capable of eroding the brain. Given that criminal behaviour has been linked to manganese toxicity, the question arises: *Are we going to imprison or execute people because they have been poisoned?* Wouldn't more effective treatment revolve around the prohibition of this neurotoxic chemical coupled with medical care to eliminate it from the biological systems of affected individuals?

Manganese is not the only industrial chemical that has been linked to neurological dysfunction with resultant violence. Lead, a well-known poison strongly associated with childhood disorders, stalemates manganese in its capacity for long-term brain damage linked to crime. According to Deborah Denno, "Lead poisoning is the strongest predictor of disciplinary problems in school, which in turn is the strongest predictor of arrests between the ages of 7-22 years" (1995). Likewise, ingestion of lead engenders "hyperactivity, impulsivity, low IQ, and low frustration tolerance." As mentioned earlier, these traits all play a key role in the emergence of criminal behavior. Meanwhile, intellectual decrements plague lead industry workers whose "body lead levels are well below toxic" (Cory-Slechta & Weiss, 1995).

Childhood lead poisoning is strongly predictive of adult criminal behavior. Tragically, 68% of children from poor, urban families "have unsafe lead levels" (Landrigan & Todd, 1995). Hence, the Slum Lord emerges as a vile progenitor of urban crime. In his refusal to de-lead his rental properties, the greedy tycoon

incurs irreparable brain damage to his tenants' children.

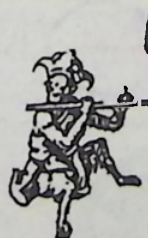
Adding exogenous manganese and lead to the blood contributes to criminal behavior. Conversely, subtracting endogenous stores of iron and cholesterol from the blood may invoke violence. But, how and why? Iron is essential to life because it is necessary for the formation of hemoglobin in the red blood cells in order to transport oxygen. Iron forms the enzymes necessary for cellular respiration and nourishes epithelial tissue (*Tabor's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary*, 1993). Because iron plays a vital role in the oxygenation of all tissues including the brain, it is not surprising that "iron deficiency impairs cognitive skills and behavior," and is "directly associated with aggressive behavior" (Melyn Werbach, 1992). Indeed, 1/3 of a population of jailed males studied by Rosen et al exhibited iron deficiency. Does poor diet drive diners to destruction, or are the study subjects somehow unable to metabolize iron properly? Iron's oxygen-carrying capacity lends itself to endless speculation about the effects of hypoxia upon human behavior.

On the other hand, data linking low cholesterol levels to violence seems more abstruse. Nonetheless, a 1993 study conducted by Hillenbrand & Foster at a forensic hospital uncovered a strong association between "low cholesterol levels and severe aggression" in their patients. This study revealed that the medical records of 106 violent patients all shared consistently sub-average serum cholesterol. Other research conducted by Matt Virkkunen et al demonstrated that the cholesterol levels of homicidal subjects dip well below population norms (1986). Some researchers

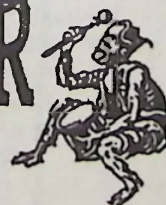
assert that cholesterol is intrinsic to the metabolism of serotonin, an important neurotransmitter. These theorists believe that a reduction in cholesterol is responsible for the violent behavior associated with altered serotonin metabolism.

Iron and cholesterol deficiency are thought to contribute to violence. Conversely, surplus uric acid and testosterone may send subjects on a rampage. For instance, men with the highest uric acid levels at one forensic facility also exhibited the highest aggression levels (*Psychological Reports*, Spitz, Hillbrand, Foster, 1995). Like the men afflicted by uricemia, prisoners beset by high serum testosterone committed more violent crimes of assault and rape than their average-testosteroned counterparts (Dabbs & Person, Georgia State University Department of Psychology, 1995). Indeed, castration to decrease testosterone production has proven itself to be a successful treatment protocol for violent offenders. One German study which underscores the efficacy of this modification found a "3% recidivist rate in castrated male sex offenders as opposed to a 46% recidivist rate" in their non-castrated counterparts (Wille & Beier, 1989). Castration is not legal in this country, but gonadotropin-releasing hormone antagonists used to suppress gonadal functioning have been utilized to excellent effect.

In conclusion, violence may have its roots in factors which are truly beyond the perpetrator's control. We still cannot pinpoint a specific cause for crime, but at least the discovery of some contributing chemical and mechanical factors raises hope for improved treatment of today's booming criminal population.



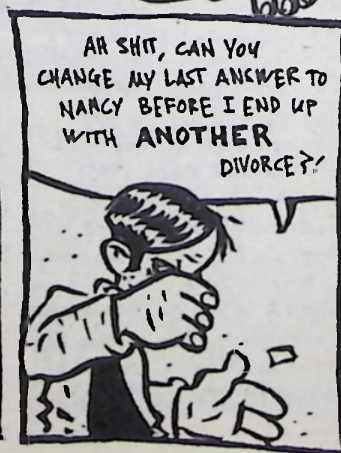
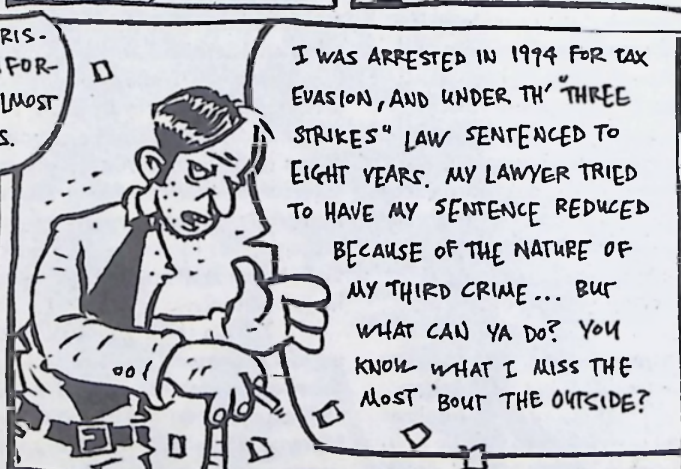
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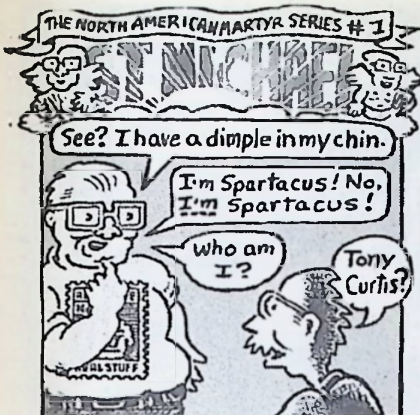


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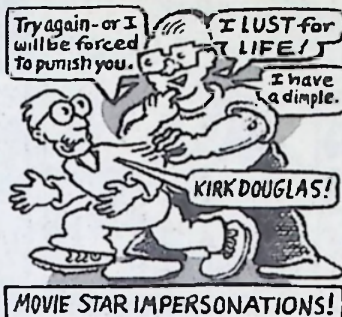
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Michael returned from Vietnam with a strange obsession:



We went to a bar where a stripper set herself on fire.



He'd impersonate anything anytime.



We scurried across Main St.



The cops got us on Fort St.



They took away my glasses, my belt and shoelaces.



Michael was in the cell across from mine.



He literally climbed the walls.



A week later we went to see an ACLU lawyer.



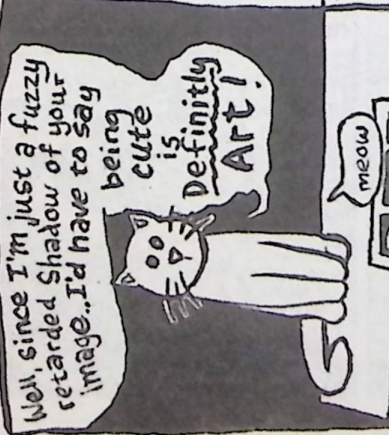
We left his office.



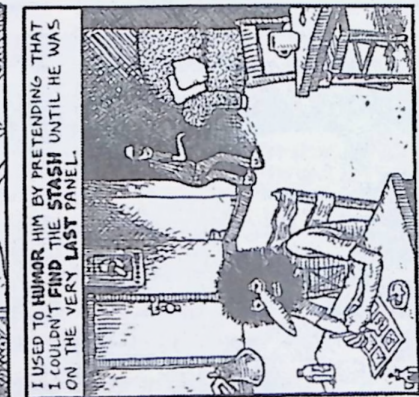
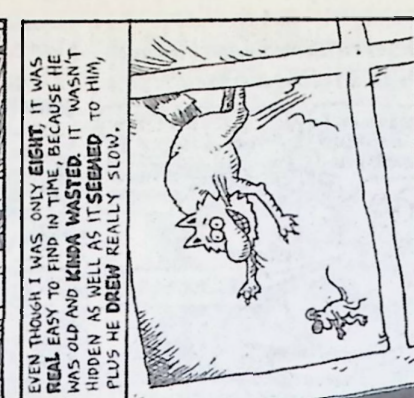
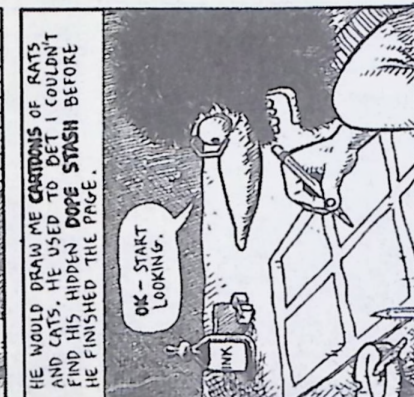
Years later, somewhere in Texas, he killed himself.



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by JAMES KOCHALKA



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by Roger and Salem Salloom© 1997

Boy, it takes a while to forget your old girlfriend.

The other night I was waiting in the ticket line at a movie theater with another girl and a nearby public phone was ringing and I really thought it was my old girlfriend calling me to ask if I wanted to meet her for an ice cream later on that night.

Really, after a while my old girlfriend and I weren't any good anymore, anyway.

I'd better start a hobby.

Maybe I'll paint very tiny figurines of the combatants of the Zulu war of 1879.

Yeah, that'll do it.

I'll paint lots of little things I can barely see.



HOW REAL IS REAL?

Hi VMag people,

I see that the reader poll in your latest issue indicates the Northampton Chamber of Commerce website is not regarded favorably. I must say I whole-heartedly agree!

If you would like to see what that web site COULD have looked like visit this web site: The REAL Northampton Page:

<http://www.thunderweb.com/northampton>.

Wayne Mercier

Thunder Web Page

Productions

OFFICIALLY UNAUTHORIZED

Hello,

I'm writing on behalf of PMA, the company which hosts AmherstCommon.com. This is the "official" Amherst website, meaning it's endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce. I'm writing to ask how I would go about getting permission to re-print one of your articles ("An Unauthorized Guide to Amherst" from issue 11) on AmherstCommon.com. We thought it would be great for the incoming students, to help them get an overview of the town.

Thanks,

Lesley

(Permission was given.) Check it out.

HIGH UNSCHOOL Editor,

I'm writing this letter in response to the essay entitled "High School" that was printed in issue 11 (September). In the essay, some very nice things were said about high school, although I, being a former high school student myself, do not think that they were realistic in many cases. Many of the statements made seemed like a teacher's ideology, trying to be as proud of his/her position as (s)he can, rather than a student's first-hand experience of high school. You must also take notice that no one ever said the "anonymous email" even was a student either.

The first sentence is, "High

School is about learning."

Immediately, I object. According to Grace Llewellyn in *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*, "Compulsory schooling in this country started because of some lofty, beautiful hopes for democracy, unfortunately mixed up with a lethal dose of arrogance and tainted with a few other impurities." She goes on to say that early American leaders argued that in a democracy, to make decisions together, the people need to have knowledge and wisdom. They wanted America to offer "everyone" an equal chance at success. (And she importantly notes that by "everyone" they mean "all the white boys who hadn't immigrated too recently.") Historian Lawrence A. Cremin writes that schools largely played a role teaching factory behavior "not only through textbook preachments, but also through the very character of their organization - the grouping, periodizing, and objective impersonality." Of course we all have higher hopes and expectations of school than offering advantages to white children and teaching our young to accept authority and march like drones in ant colonies off to the factory, but trying to reform the institution is like trying to give wings to a submarine. It will never fly, and probably won't even navigate as well in the water.

Schools have shown not to be the best way for learning. The lack of freedom found in high school is detrimental to the learning process. Grace Llewellyn writes, "The mind will be free, or it will be dead." She also mentions the negative effects to the love of learning, saying, "We are all born with what they call 'love of learning,' but it dives off into an elusive void when we go to school." Then there are grades. There are the bad ones which start a vicious cycle, making you feel like a failure, which in turn cripples you and prevents you from succeeding, and the good ones which are often equally dangerous. "Good grades encourage you to forsake everything worthwhile that you might love, just to keep getting them," she writes.

In an interview with James

Peck, Noam Chomsky (Institute Professor, Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, at MIT), who went to an alternative elementary school, says that "it wasn't until I was in high school that I knew I was a good student. The question had never arisen." He says that at the earlier school "which was essentially a Deweyite school and I think a very good one, judging from my experience, there was a tremendous premium on individual creativity, not in the sense of slapping paints on paper, but doing the kind of work and thinking that you were interested in," saying that "every student in the school I had previously attended was regarded as somehow being a very successful student." On the other hand he describes high school as "an absolute blank in my memory apart from the emotional tone, which was quite negative." He goes on to say of schoolin; "It's a period of regimentation and control, part of which involves direct indoctrination, providing a system of false beliefs. But more importantly, I think, is the manner and style of preventing and blocking independent and creative thinking and imposing hierarchies and competitiveness..."

Many well-known people have opted out of high school. To name a few: Whoopi Goldberg, Charles Dickens, Thomas Edison, Peter Jennings, Henry Ford, Cyndi Lauper, George Bernard Shaw, Bo Diddley, Frank Lloyd Wright, Liz Claiborne, Yehudi Menuhin. Albert Einstein has been quoted that the "coercion [of schooling] had such a deterring effect [upon me] that, after I had passed the final examination, I found the consideration of any scientific problems distasteful to me for an entire year." John Taylor Gatto, New York State Teacher of the Year, 1991, says that "No one believes anymore that scientists are trained in science classes or politicians in civics classes or poets in English classes. The truth is that schools don't really teach anything except how to obey orders."

So, as the second paragraph says, school's not just about learning what is taught in your required class-

es. Although the essay, instead of mentioning obeying orders, destroying the love of learning, and preventing and blocking creative and independent thinking, the essayist goes on to say that high school is about "learning to treat people as people and not as stereotypes," and "learning how to not come in first place and still be proud." Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't high school the very place where kids learn the stereotypes? Surely it's not from their family or the diverse and well-cultured homeschoolers that they meet outside of school. Surely the kids that are forced to spend most of their time in a mostly- or all-white school in a small town aren't the ones learning to tolerate other races. And isn't school the very place where you first are exposed to not coming in first? Isn't school the very system which imposes grades, the pressure and importance of them, and the feeling of failure that comes with being graded?

The essayist writes that high school is also about learning that "loneliness doesn't go away in a crowd." This is of course true. Being forced to spend your time with a certain crowd of kids of the same age and similar grades who all decide to conform to the crowd, like high-schoolers usually do, will probably make you feel alienated and lonely if the people you can relate to are a different age, in the lower or higher classes than you, or if you are the one getting picked on because you don't conform to the crowd. And they'll tell you that boredom is simply laziness of the mind, like the anonymous E-mailer does, when they don't want you to question that maybe you're bored because of the regimentation, control, the detriment to your love of learning, or any of the other reasons that school makes most people bored. I agree that watching three hours of Thursday night NBC is not quality relaxation time. Unfortunately, though, most of our highschoolers are driven to the television by school. If they weren't forced to read things they don't care about for six hours a day at school, they'd probably read something they did care about at home. If the endless hours of school hadn't eroded their love of learning, they might even take a walk in the woods to

examine the ecology. If their brains weren't fried from memorizing facts all day, maybe they'd have the energy to pick up a guitar or saxophone when they got home and toot some tunes. But unfortunately, their tired minds are driven to Thursday night NBC.

According to the essay, "High School is about learning how to pack a bag, how to pack a car, and how to pack a room full of way too much stuff." Only God and this essayist know why anyone would want to learn how to pack anything with too much stuff, but it reminds me of when Grace Llewellyn, in her book, says, "Schools cram you too full too fast. I don't mean they challenge you. I mean they throw too much busywork in your face. Being in school is like being incredibly hungry and sitting at Burger King eating too much, too fast to be satisfied, and then puking it up. Good learning, like good eating, is not only mental and physical, but also spiritual. Generally, you can satisfy the craving only in calm. If you don't have sufficient time or peace to digest knowledge, it only gives you a headache."

School, the essayist says, is about learning, "what the phrase 'make do' means." One can only assume this is referring to the passivity of making school do and not seeking alternatives. What are the alternatives? There are many charter schools. There is homeschooling, which is also called 'unschooling,'

'self-directed education,' or simply 'freedom.' You'll find these alternative phrases near the beginning of Pathfinder Learning Center's brochure. Pathfinder is a community center for teenagers who choose not to go to school. They help you get started unschooling, find internships or tutors, and pursue your interests. PLC offers classes, field trips, and equally important, a place to hang out. You can call them at 413.253.9412, check out their website at www.pathfindercenter.org, or simply stop by at 256 N. Pleasant Street in Amherst next door to Silverscape. Grace Llewellyn's book, *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*, is available through Pathfinder.

High School, as the third paragraph says, is about "learning what you really don't care about."

There are alternatives.

Christopher Masterjohn
Warren, MA
(age 16, former high school student, unschooler, member of Pathfinder, currently enrolled at Springfield Technical Community College)

U.M., ER...

Last issue's "Unauthorized Guide to Amherst" failed to note that the Amherst Brewery features live music every Thursday through Monday. VMag will now stop hiring ex-Boston Globe fact-checkers.

NEXT ISSUE



COMING FOR YOU
OCTOBER 19

AN ALIEN HALLOWEEN

"I just need a little SPACE!"

We've all been there: You get a great idea, need to remember a phone number, have to sketch something, draw a map, write down a lyric... and there's no paper anywhere. The next time this happens, help will be as close as a copy of VMag. Through issue 13, Larien Products (a great little Northampton company) will sponsor this "creativity page." Now, when you get hit with a brainstorm or just need to put something down on paper, grab the nearest writing implement and a copy of VMag and GO WILD!

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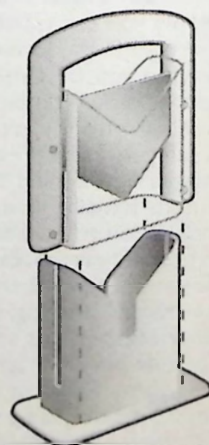
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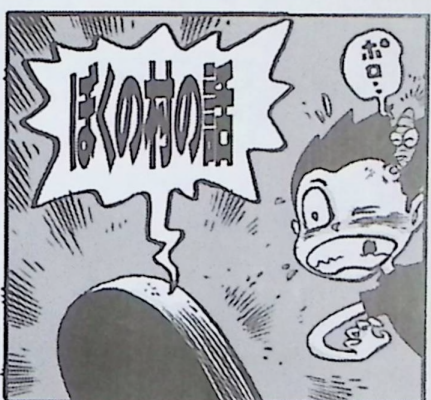
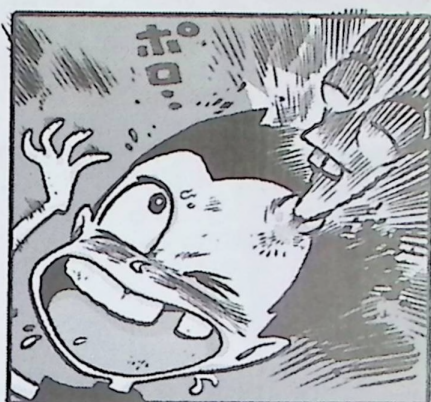
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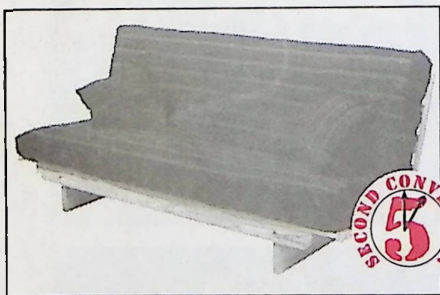
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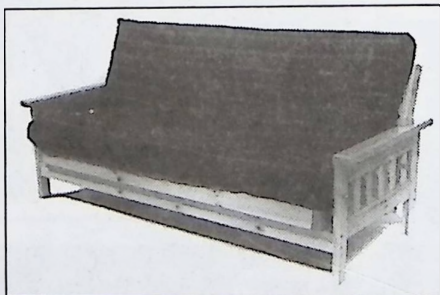
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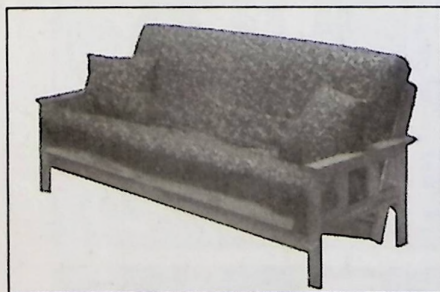
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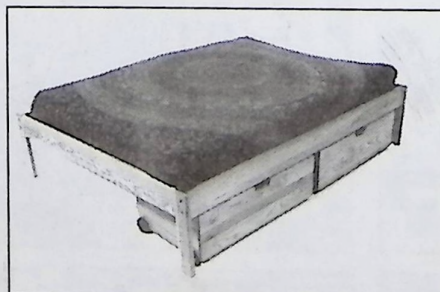
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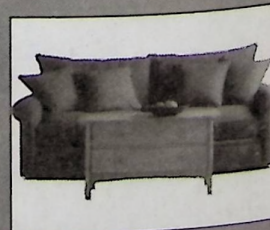
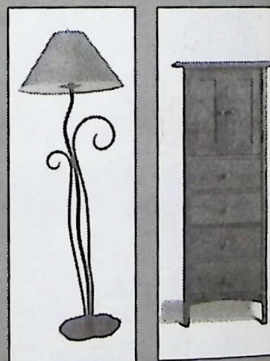
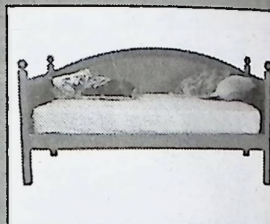
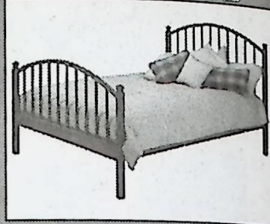
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